

MIDAMERICAN PROGRESS REPORT 2

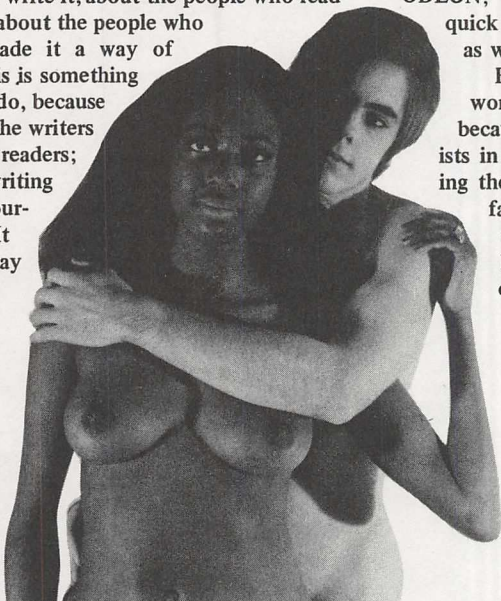


It's here at last! The fanzine devoted to the things kids like most.

NICKELODEON is the latest chapter in Tom Reamy's quest for the ultimate fanzine. (I just don't want to be around when he finally finds it.)

NICKELODEON is the magazine for people who like science fiction and fantasy. It's a magazine about sf and fantasy, about the people who write it, about the people who read it, and about the people who have made it a way of life. This is something we can do, because we are the writers and the readers; we're writing about ourselves. It is our way of life.

Photo by Jack Stone

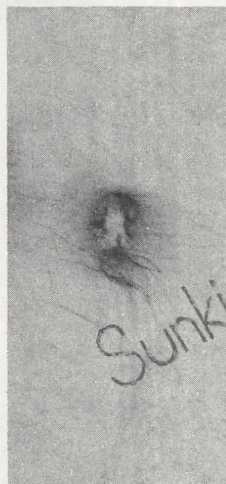


Unclad Persons

Well-known sf fans and pros reveal everything in our centerfolds. Steven Utley, author of "Hung Like an Elephant" appears in the first issue. Future centerfolds will sometimes be female, sometimes male, and sometimes one of each. Who would you like to see?

In NICKELODEON the writers write about things that couldn't be published professionally—and also about a few things that could—and the readers and fans answer them back. Sometimes it's serious and constructive, sometimes it's purely bananas, but it's always entertaining. You'll find no taboos in NICKELODEON, no revered sacred cows. We are quick to poke fun at our own idiocies—as well as those of others.

But NICKELODEON is not only words. We publish many things simply because they are beautiful. The best artists in the field appear in our pages, doing their best works. We can say without false modesty, NICKELODEON is the most beautiful fanzine you're likely to see—until Tom Reamy goes on to more grandiose realms.



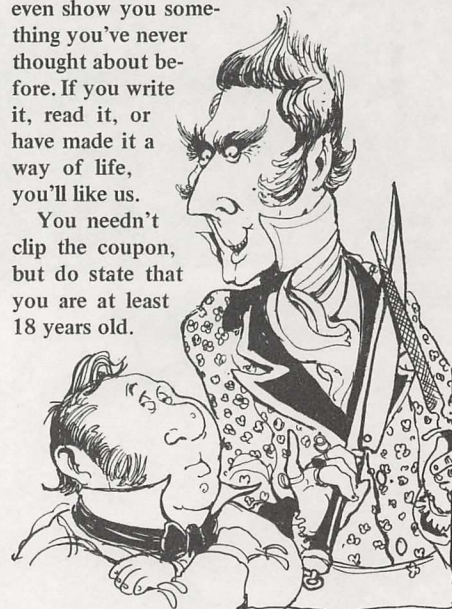
Bellybuttons

Get in on the ground floor of a brand new fringe fandom.

We are into science fiction because we love it. In NICKELODEON you will see its flow not only through the fiction, but through the politics, the foibles, the passions, and the visual arts of its people.

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Comic strips, satire, parody and just plain funny stuff.



Big Names

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nickelodeon

the exotic science fiction and fantasy quarterly

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MidAmeriCon

September 1-6, 1976
Kansas City, Missouri

34th World Science Fiction Convention

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MidAmeriCon Progress Report No. 2 is edited and designed by Tom Reamy. Cover by Tim Kirk. Produced by Nickelodeon Graphic Arts Service. Extra copies are available at \$1.50 each. Please notify us of your change of address. A 25c charge will be made for each copy remailed. New membership rates: page 9, Cartoons by Bill Rotsler. Copyright 1975 by MidAmeriCon.

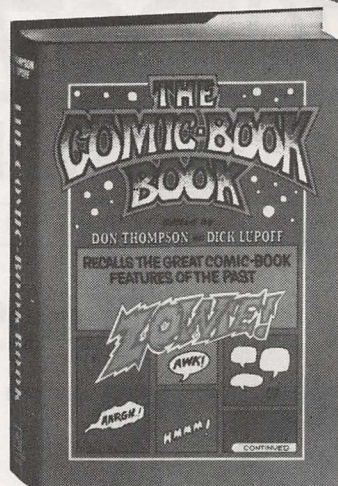


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THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF COMIC BOOKS

- Phantom Lady's patriotism: "America comes first—even before Dad"
- Gene Tunney and Jack Dempsey pen mash notes to *Sensation Comics*
- How a Ph.D. psychologist dreamt up Wonder Woman. Its strange psychosexual mix
- The first Tarzan story: 95,000 words written in longhand on somebody else's stationery by a 35-year-old pauper
- Plastic Man and Hugh Hefner
- Triumphant researchers unearth a pre-Disney Mickey and Minnie Mouse
- It came from Lafayette Street: the birth of *Mad*
- Comics Code Authority softens its stand against vampires and werewolves, provided they are "used in the classic manner"
- Little Orphan Annie's radio boyfriend: Why Joe Cornstassle was created
- Madam Fatal: here in drag
- Turnabout is fair play. "The Lonely Dungeon" (*Mystery Tales* #18) "proves" that the monster created Dr. Frankenstein
- *New York Magazine* brings back The Spirit
- The schizophrenia of the EC symbol: Education Comics (*Picture Stories from the Bible*) and Entertaining Comics (*Haunt of Fear*, etc.)
- Carl Barks' life at the Disney Studios: "I was just a duck man—strictly a duck man"
- Radio at its best—the opening chant of *Superman*
- Comic book wartime slogan: "Tin Cans in the Garbage Pile Are Just a Way of Saying 'Heil!'"



Well, it wasn't great literature (gasp!), but we all read it. On a lazy summer afternoon, the only sound heard in the land was the flipping of comic-book pages at Pop's soda fountain, or under the old elm tree (remember elms?).

In *The Comic-Book Book*, popular culture historians Dick Lupoff and Don Thompson continue the missionary work they began with the justly acclaimed pioneer volume, *All in Color for a Dime*. Aided by a crew of outrageously knowledgeable comic-book buffs and a batch of carefully chosen illustrations, they evoke the old magic—and also make some penetrating, scholarly, nostalgic and wildly funny remarks on those never-to-be-forgotten pleasures of our innocent youth.

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MAC-100

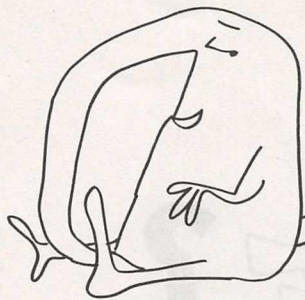
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☐ I don't care to join the Club but I enclose \$8.95. Please send *The Comic-Book Book* postpaid. If not pleased I may return book in 30 days for full refund PLUS extra cash to cover my return postage.



Here's the secret of reaching 6,000 science fiction fans for as little as 1/10¢ each

EFFECTIVE FEB. 1, 1975. This rate sheet supersedes all previous advertising information, and is subject to even further change.

The Program Book and Progress Reports of the **34th World Science Fiction Convention (MidAmeriCon)** will set new standards of quality and craftsmanship never before imagined. They will be seen by more people and prized above all previous Worldcon publications. Nowhere will you find a better showcase for your advertising—and nowhere can your advertising dollar be better spent.

The beautiful 8½"x11" **hardcover** Program Book will be given to all attending members of MidAmeriCon and mailed to all non-attending members. The equally beautiful 8½"x11" softcover Progress Reports will also be given to all attending members and mailed to all non-attending members. Whether your ads are in the Progress Reports or the Program Book, they will be seen by the same members of the science fiction community (estimated circulation of both the Progress Reports and the Program Book is 6,000+)—and the Progress Report ad rates are a bit cheaper.

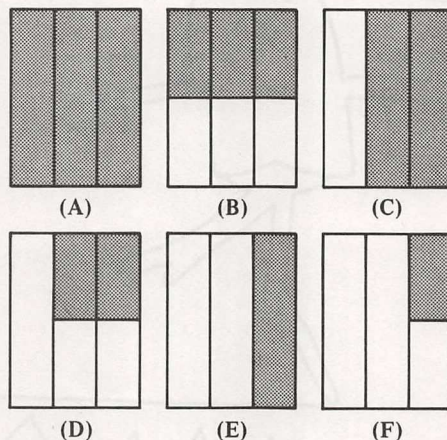
ADVERTISING DEADLINES:

Progress Report 2: January 15, 1975
Progress Report 3: June 1, 1975
Progress Report 4: December 1, 1975
Progress Report 5: May 1, 1976
Program Book: June 15, 1976

MECHANICAL REQUIREMENTS:

As the MidAmeriCon Progress Reports and Program Book will be printed 8½"x11" and the text will be in three columns—as it is here—we can offer a much wider assortment of ad sizes and prices. The sizes explained and diagrammed below are for full-copy: **DO NOT** leave

a border—the ad copy should fill those sizes. You may submit camera-ready originals, photostats, or negatives. **Please read carefully.** The size requirements are different for each.



Negatives:

Negatives **must** be submitted final printed size. If they are not, they cannot be used.

- (A) Full page (7½"x10")
- (B) Half page (7½"x4-7/8")
- (C) Two column/full page (5"x10")
- (D) Two column/half page (5"x4-7/8")
- (E) One column/full page (2-3/8"x10")
- (F) One column/half page (2-3/8"x4-7/8")

Photostats:

Photostats must be submitted paste-up size (except full pages), and must not be mounted on board.

- (A) Full page (9-3/8"x12½") or 7½"x10"
- (B) Half page (9-3/8"x6")
- (C) Two column/full page (6¼"x12½")
- (D) Two column/half page (6¼"x6")
- (E) One column/full page (3"x12½")
- (F) One column/half page (3"x6")

Camera-ready Originals:

Originals (except full-pages) must be submitted paste-up size—the same as photostats—and should not be mounted on board. Full-pages, however, may be submitted any size as long as they are proportioned to reduce to the sizes indicated under "Negatives."

ADVERTISING RATES:

Rates are for Progress Reports only. Program Book rates will be published at a later date.

	<i>pro</i>	<i>fan</i>
(A) Full page	\$48.00	\$30.00
(B) Half page	28.00	17.00
(C) Two column/full page	37.00	20.00
(D) Two column/half page	20.00	12.00
(E) One column/full page	20.00	12.00
(F) One column/half page	12.00	6.00

BLEEDS AND INSERTS:

Add 20% for bleeds. Inserts not available.

COLOR:

Please enquire and provide full details.

HALFTONES:

No additional charge if screened negatives or photostats are provided. Add \$7.50 for each ad if stripping or screening is required of our printer.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING:

Set solid, no display, 10c per word, \$2.00 minimum, name and address free.

REMITTANCE:

Full remittance must accompany all fan and classified ads unless previous arrangements have been made. 5% discount to all professional advertisers if payment accompanies ad copy—if billed, net: 30 days. 5% discount to all advertisers who buy space in the three remaining Progress Reports. Payment must accompany first ad. Make all checks payable to: MidAmeriCon.

AESTHETICS:

We reserve the right to refuse ads on aesthetic grounds—for reasons of both questionable taste and sloppy execution.

MAILING INSTRUCTIONS:

Pack ad copy carefully with sufficient cardboard stiffeners and mail to: MidAmeriCon, P.O. Box 221, Kansas City, MO 64141. Ads cannot be returned unless postage is included.

MIDAMERICON

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- ☐ Copy enclosed
- ☐ Copy will arrive later
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NAME _____

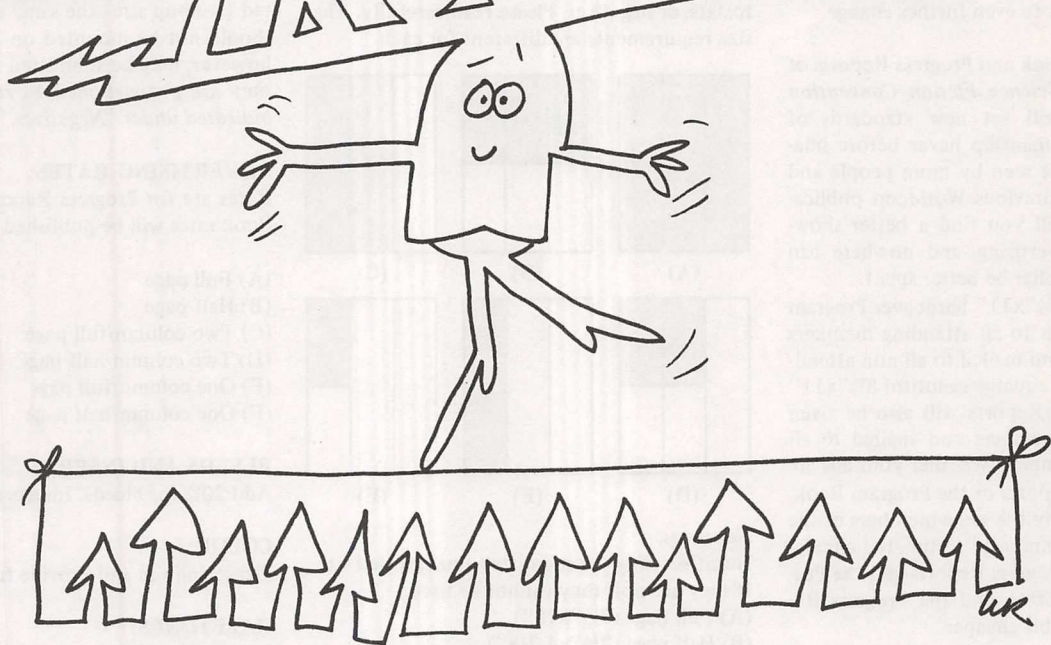
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34TH • WORLD SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION

YOU THINK YOU'VE GOT TROUBLE?



A Statement of Dismay by Ken Keller

To those who lived through it and survived, it was *painfully* apparent that Discon II signaled the end of an era—the era of the unrestricted Worldcon. And more disturbingly, it signaled the beginning of a dangerously new one in the history of the World Science Fiction Convention: the G*I*G*A*N*T*I*C*O*N!

It was also quite obvious that something very drastic would *have* to happen. If it didn't future Worldcon committees would be faced with the rather unpleasant prospect of being inundated by the hordes of fans now being attracted, in ever growing numbers, to the Worldcons. And what lucky Worldcon committee, graced with an incredible sense of timing, grabbed this brass-ring-of-a-problem while on the carousel of fandom? You guessed it, Ace, good ol' Cowntown, USA.

Where have all these new fans come from? Why has the Worldcon grown in attendance by such leaps and bounds? The answer lies partially in the astoundingly sudden popularity and acceptance of SF and fantasy in many levels of society—especially among educators and students at the high school and college level. To state the obvious, SF and fantasy are no longer in the literary ghetto.

We have arrived—and look at all the nice people who are waiting in our con registration areas to welcome us.

As near as we can determine the *major* attendance increases are coming from the ever-growing fringe and sub-fandoms and the local at-the-door attendees, many of whom *seem* to have little or no interest in mainstream SF. It is these people who are clogging the halls and jamming the major events, much to the dismay of long-time con goers.

Still a bit skeptical of this “doomsday” rhetoric? If so, look at the recent record and judge for yourself: L.A.Con in '72 had a *total* paying membership of just over 2000. Torcon, the following year, topped 3000 and Discon, this past year, broke the 4500 mark! A quick calculation will show that this is an approximate increase of 50% over the previous year's total membership. (A glance at our roster in this PR will show that we have well over twice the membership Discon had at this point.) It must be remembered that the *attending* membership of these Worldcons was less than the total paid membership, but this 50% increase applies to them also.

Skipping the Aussiecon this year, it is easy to project a total membership for MidAmeriCon of close to 7000. And that, dear friends, is only a “normal” increase projected along that escalating percentage curve! This doesn't

even take into consideration the additional people our Guest of Honor may be expected to pull in. Nor does it take into account the extra fans who are always attracted to the Worldcon when the previous year's con is outside of North America. And let us not forget the easy accessibility of KC's almost dead-center geographic location in the US.

So, you think you've got troubles? Tell me about it.

Admittedly, the country's current economic instability could continue to worsen over the next year and a half to the point where transportation costs alone could keep away all but the most die-hard convention fan. An equitable solution, to be sure, but not a very pleasing one when you consider the other unpleasanties a recession brings. The question is, can we count on this possibility to keep attendance down at MidAmeriCon? We don't think we can—there are just too many intangibles to consider. It's a possibility, but *possibilities* are not solutions to immediate problems.

Why will drastic measures be necessary to keep things under control? The answer is two-fold: first, the Worldcon has simply grown to the point that it's almost beyond the control of an *amateur* committee. The horror stories that have filtered out of past Worldcon committees (divorces, bitter disagreements, mass gaffiations, etc.) are brutal testimony to this fact. For our own survival, and for those committees to follow, we must begin to "put on the brakes" or the Worldcon will surely collapse under its own weight.

The second, and most important, reason is that the hotels now available in most major cities are too small to hold the major functions and/or house all the attendees. The only alternative is to go the convention center route and I honestly don't think many people are looking forward to that solution for a good many reasons. The logistics problems and cost would be enormous and would surely involve (from necessity) paid professionals to manage the whole thing.

In our case, multiple housing will be necessary in order to accommodate everyone who is expected to attend. Fortunately, it will be no inconvenience as overflow hotels are in plentiful supply and located close to the Muehlebach—two directly across the street and another in the same block. However, the Muehlebach's convention facilities are only about two-thirds as large as those of Discon's Park Sheraton. We simply cannot hold a convention any larger than Discon without being in serious trouble. As it is, MidAmeriCon will be using the 2600 seat Music Hall in KC's Municipality Auditorium for one or two of the convention's larger functions. (The Auditorium is directly across the street from the Muehlebach.)

If necessary we will also use the convention facilities in the Phillips House, our primary overflow hotel across the street from the Muehlebach. Even these extra facilities may prove inadequate if the attendance at MAC is as large as has been predicted.

KC IN '76 T-SHIRTS

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Our price is a low \$5.50 per T-shirt ordered and we will pay the postage. Foreign countries add \$1.00 to cost.

Allow 2-4 weeks for delivery.

You think you've got trouble? Sure you do.

Soon after Discon the MidAmeriCon committee began to look seriously at the various options open to us on this volatile question. Under the direction of the committee Bill Fesselmeyer, the Program Coordinator for MidAmeriCon, drew up the viable alternatives and submitted them in published form for consideration and general comments. Because of the historical importance of this matter, we reproduce, in slightly condensed form, the alternatives as originally submitted to the MidAmeriCon committee:

The first alternative is to somehow set a limit on the number of people who are allowed to attend. There are several different methods that could be used, and some of the methods could be effectively combined.

The first method of limiting attendance is to simply set an absolute number of memberships to be sold—the number being what the hotel facilities can comfortably hold.

Advantages:

1. Under no circumstances could the facilities become overcrowded.
2. Such an arbitrary limit is reasonably fair to all; anyone can be expected to understand "first come, first served."

Disadvantages:

1. The convention would have to have an extremely tight budget. In the past several years, the at-the-door fees have provided a margin of safety beyond budgeted expenses.

This plan would mean that only a fixed amount would be coming in, without even a hope of that last minute "bonus." With inflation the way it is, how could the committee project expenses accurately enough to be sure it wouldn't be caught by the inflation?

2. Do you count supporting memberships against the total memberships to be sold? If you do, it's likely many of these people will have no intention of attending, thus squeezing out people who would have come. If you don't count them, it is possible a large number will convert at the door and blow your set limits.

3. If the number is not reached at least 4 or 5 months in advance, many will want to buy memberships at the door, saying that memberships were still available the last they heard. (It would take at least 4 or 5 months to get the word out that memberships were sold out.)

4. If, in an attempt to get around the previous objection, the committee set an arbitrary date for the end of sales, it's quite possible there would be enough unsold memberships to put the convention in the red. By that time it would be too late to reopen memberships and notify fandom that x-many are still available. The best that could be done would be to spread the word that the committee goofed and will sell memberships at the door. This would do two things: anger those who had bought memberships according to the rules, and throw the con open to anyone who

WHAT DO THESE DISCRIMINATING SENTIENT LIFE FORMS HAVE IN COMMON?

JOHN ALDERSON - AUS
DANIELE BEVILACQUA - I
THOMAS CLARESON - USA
GIAN PAOLO COSSATO - I
SEZAR ERKIN ERGIN - TR
ANDREA FERRARI - I
BEVERLY FRIEND - USA
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LISA KAUFMAN - USA
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WALDEMAR KUMMING - D
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ALAN SANDERCOCK - AUS
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EVA SIMONE-AVAROSSY - H
DAVE SELL - USA
DENNIS STOCKS - AUS
DICK WEST - USA

BESIDES BEING READERS OF THE SPANG BLAH THEY ALL SUPPORT JAN HOWARD FINDER for DUFF HOW ABOUT YOU ?

* DUFF, THE DOWN UNDER FAN FUND WAS CREATED IN 1972 TO ENCOURAGE CLOSER TIES BETWEEN FANS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE PACIFIC. THIS YEAR'S RAGE WILL SEND A NORTH AMERICAN FAN TO THE 1975 WORLD SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION BEING HELD IN MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA. IF YOU CAN NOT OBTAIN A BALLOT ELSEWHERE WRITE TO THE SPANG BLAH AND REQUEST ONE.
SPANG BLAH
PSC BOX 614
APO NY 09293
O R
SPANG BLAH
PSC BOX 614
U.S. AIR BASE
33081 AVIANO, ITALY

showed up at the door, thus defeating the concept of the set limit.

5. In any case, whether an arbitrary date is set or not, if all memberships are not sold in advance and some are sold at the door, how could you turn away people who came on Saturday, for example, when the last allowable membership was sold on Friday?

a. If they were allowed in anyway, you run the risk of having a thousand more people than the facilities can hold.

b. You can't turn them away because, when they were notified, at-the-door memberships were still available.

c. Many of these people may have traveled a great distance and would have nowhere else to go if they were turned away. It would be decidedly unfair to let in the long distance travelers and not the locals. It would also be unfair to those who stayed home, assuming they couldn't arrive in time to buy at-the-door memberships.

6. There is already enough of a gate-crasher problem at Worldcons. This plan would insure massive gate-crashing.

Another proposal to limit membership is to sell only advance memberships—none to be sold at-the-door. However, supporting memberships could be converted to attending at-the-door.

Advantages:

1. The committee would have all the funds in advance and would not have to guess when budgeting.

2. This is also reasonably fair to everyone and easily understood as "put up or shut up."

3. It would decrease registration problems—everyone would be pre-registered.

Disadvantages:

1. Although it would help to know how much money is available, there is still no surplus as an edge against inflation.

2. Many, not sure if they could attend or not, might buy supporting memberships on speculation and convert at the door, putting the attendance beyond the capacity of the facilities.

3. Fans or pros could show up and try to "pull rank" creating an unpleasant scene, and a problem whether you let them in or not.

4. People would claim to have sent in memberships that were never received—which, in some cases, might even be true.

5. This plan discriminates against potential Kansas City fans who would not be allowed to come in off the street to see what SF cons are all about.

6. This plan is still not a certain way to limit memberships. Suppose there were 7000 advance memberships?

The proposals to limit memberships by a set number and selling only advance memberships have much in common. The disadvantages are not listed under both proposals, but it should be obvious that the problems of enforcement and fairness are almost identical.

The major flaw shared by both plans is if the limiting factor works too well. If the advance sales are too far below the limiting num-

ber, the committee will have the dismal choice of losing money on the convention, or reversing themselves and selling as many at-the-door memberships as possible—using any means.

Still another alternative for limiting the attendance would be to charge a prohibitive at-the-door fee. This would encourage most people to join early or not come at all. This would be accompanied by a rapidly accelerating rate scale that gets substantially higher as the cons nears.

Advantages:

1. No one would be arbitrarily excluded. If they decided to attend at the last minute they would have to pay, but at least they would be able to get in.

2. This is the best financial plan of all: it insures both a large amount of money in advance (when it is needed) and the bonus of at-the-door fees—which could add up quickly even if only a handful registered.

3. Registration will be almost entirely pre-con.

4. Local fans would not be singled out for exclusion. If they heard about it in time to join at the lower rates, fine. If not, they pay to get in the same as any other late-comer.

Disadvantages:

1. In spite of the fact that none of the money will find its way into the hands of the committee, cries of "profiteering" could arise.

2. More people than the facilities can hold may simply register early.

3. Fans appear to be more affluent than in the past and may still prefer to register at-the-door in huge numbers.

4. Gate-crashing will be a big temptation.

5. There will still be complaints about lost pre-registration.

The next proposal to limit attendance is radically different from the preceding ones. It at least makes a pretense of being fair to everybody. The proposal is to program the convention in a way to discourage certain special interest groups and fringe fans. There are large numbers who attend the Worldcons who are not interested in mainstream SF or fandom at all. They come only for those few events or features devoted to their limited interest. But, just so their money won't be wasted, they drag their bodies to all the major functions—and boo when the Hugo doesn't go to their special interest.

By not including, or *permitting* these special interest groups access to the program, and *advertising that fact*, these people will be discouraged from attending because there will be nothing there to interest them.

Advantages:

1. No one will be excluded; only those not interested will be warned away. The con committee is under no obligation to cater to any particular special interest group and need not include their favored activities in the program. If people decided there was nothing to interest them and stayed home, the committee should be applauded for truth in advertising.

2. The fringe fans this plan is designed to

discourage are the ones who always seem to attract the attention of the press and, by and large, do not reflect credit on the rest of the convention.

Disadvantages:

1. The special interest groups thus singled out will be very upset. (Please note that no one is suggesting the elimination of *all* special interest events—such as the Georgette Heyer Tea or the Burroughs Dum-Dum, which attract virtually no one who wouldn't come anyway—but rather only those special interests that would attract large numbers who would otherwise stay home.)

2. There will be hucksters who want to sell things to those special interest groups. They could be *very* upset if their potential customers didn't show up.

3. Part of the flavor of the Worldcon comes from all the special interest groups who attend.

4. This still does not guarantee that too many people will not show up.

It should be obvious that program discouragement could be combined with any of the other plans to limit attendance.

The last alternative is to not set any limits at all, but to encourage a large enough attendance that the convention can afford to rent the Municipality Auditorium for its major functions.

Advantages:

1. Absolutely no one need be excluded.

2. The facilities would not be overcrowded during such events as the masquerade or the meet the authors party.

3. Local attendance could (must) be encouraged, both for the at-the-door fees and for the sake of future KC fandom.

Disadvantages:

1. The cost could well be prohibitive if less than 8 to 10 thousand people attended. If the convention failed to draw the requisite number, the committee would be stuck with a massive debt and no way to pay it. It should be fairly obvious that advance registration would not cover the rental of all that space, leaving it up to at-the-door fees that could fail to materialize.

2. With the large number of attendees required, the other facilities would be overcrowded when there was no major event to draw people from the hotel.

3. The sheer number of attendees required to make the con break even financially would insure huge crowds of neofans, fringe fans, and worse yet, non-fans on hand to make it difficult for trufans to locate each other, etc.

4. During the late evening hours (party time) there could be unruly crowds in the hotel who might be unmanageable both because of their numbers and because they are not fans and wouldn't understand about closed parties, etc.

After many hours of discussing the pros and cons of the proposals, the MidAmeriCon committee decided to table further debate on this very important decision until we could get

LOOK!

NEW MEMBERSHIP RATES!

Beginning:	Attending	Supporting
January 1, 1975	\$ 6.00	\$4.00
May 1, 1975	10.00	5.00
September 1, 1975	15.00	5.00
January 1, 1976	20.00	6.00
May 1, 1976	25.00	6.00
August 1, 1976		
—and At the Door	50.00	6.00

Supporting memberships may be converted to attending at any time, but the conversion rate is the difference between what you paid for the supporting membership and the attending rate *at the time of conversion*.

opinions from fandom at large. Under the cover title of *Whichness of the Why*, the five alternatives to the question of limiting attendance were distributed by Bill Fesselmeyer via the mails to a large number of veteran congoers. They were then distributed at the 1974 MILEHICON in Denver and WINDYCON in Chicago, and finally run through various APAs of which Bill is a member.

Response to *Whichness of the Why* was most interesting and can be sampled in the lettercolumn elsewhere in this PR. The opinions were generally in line with our own thinking and helped a great deal in our reaching what we feel is the most equitable solution to the problem.

We realized that whatever the decision our actions would generate criticism from the less progressive in fandom—those who worship some hazy golden-age of fandom that never really existed, those who will not face reality. Yes, Virginia, reality *does* intrude into fandom now and again. It is a very definite reality that the Worldcon *must* change or perish. With this in mind, the MidAmeriCon committee finalized the attendance limiting policy at its December 22nd meeting.

We decided to combine a high at-the-door fee with an escalating schedule of membership rates, rates that grow significantly higher as the convention nears. (I direct your attention to the rate schedule on this page.) It was also decided that the rate for converting from supporting to attending would be the difference between the amount paid for the supporting membership and the attending rate *at the time of conversion*. It is our belief that this is the only practical and *fair* way to really discourage an overwhelming attendance; using a form of financial discrimination that works equally against everyone.

Those who are only marginally interested will hopefully be turned off by the higher rates (cons have *never* charged such outrageous prices), especially those who always join at the last minute or at the door. Admittedly,

this is *not* a perfect solution—alas, there is no perfect solution. However, the theory seems sound; it only needs proving. If it doesn't decrease attendance, it should at least slow the increase. Famous last words, perhaps?

If it appears these measures are totally ineffective, a limit *may* have to be set. It's something we surely don't want to do, but we will if necessity demands.

In addition to the economic controls, the MidAmeriCon committee has also adopted the policy of "discouragement" programming in the following special interest areas: comics, *Star Trek*, *Planet of the Apes*, and the Society for Creative Anachronisms.

Before you begin gibbering at the moon and writing us long-winded letters of hate and outrage, calm down and think about it. What this means, simply, is: there will be no activities of any kind related to these areas on the MidAmeriCon program. When choosing the areas for which to de-program, we used a very simple criterion: which fandoms have outgrown the need of a "shelter" under the wing of the World Science Fiction Convention? Which are now independent and have their own conventions (or large gatherings) and exist completely apart from mainstream science fiction fandom?

We are *not* saying that people interested in these areas will not be welcome at MidAmeriCon. On the contrary, *everyone* who has a genuine interest in science fiction and fantasy is welcome and encouraged to attend. If, however, any of these areas are your only reason for coming, then be warned that there will be nothing at MidAmeriCon to interest you. MAC will be strictly an SF and fantasy convention.

Another time-honored programming tradition (coincidentally begun in Missouri in 1969 at St. Louiscon—six years is "time-honored" in fandom) will also bite the dust: all-night movies. Because of one of the developing themes of MidAmeriCon—"SF, fantasy and the arts"—we do not feel the film program should be eliminated entirely. Also, a well-planned film program can be successful in pulling people away from certain "crowd-problem" program items, such as the masquerade. Generally, the films will not last beyond one o'clock in the morning; at which time the film room will be locked and guarded until it reopens early the next afternoon.

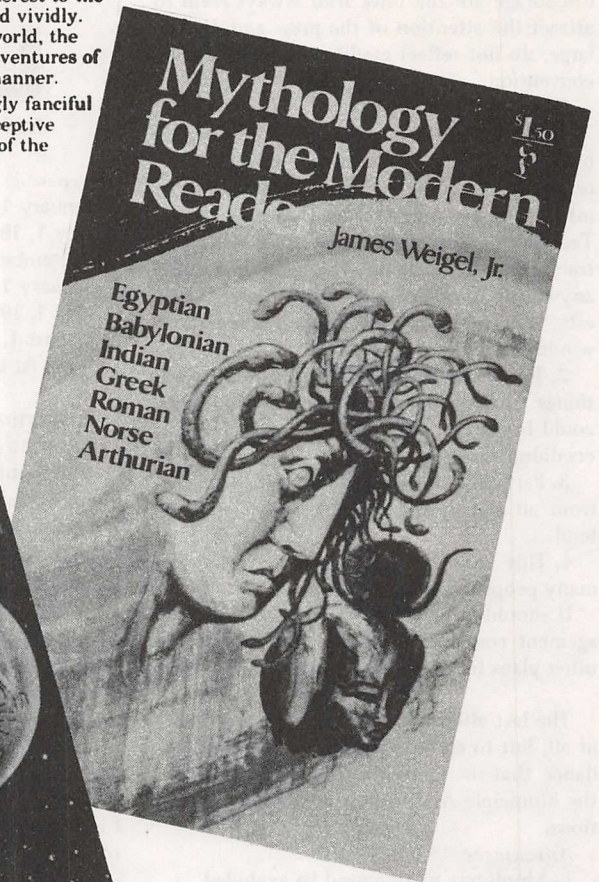
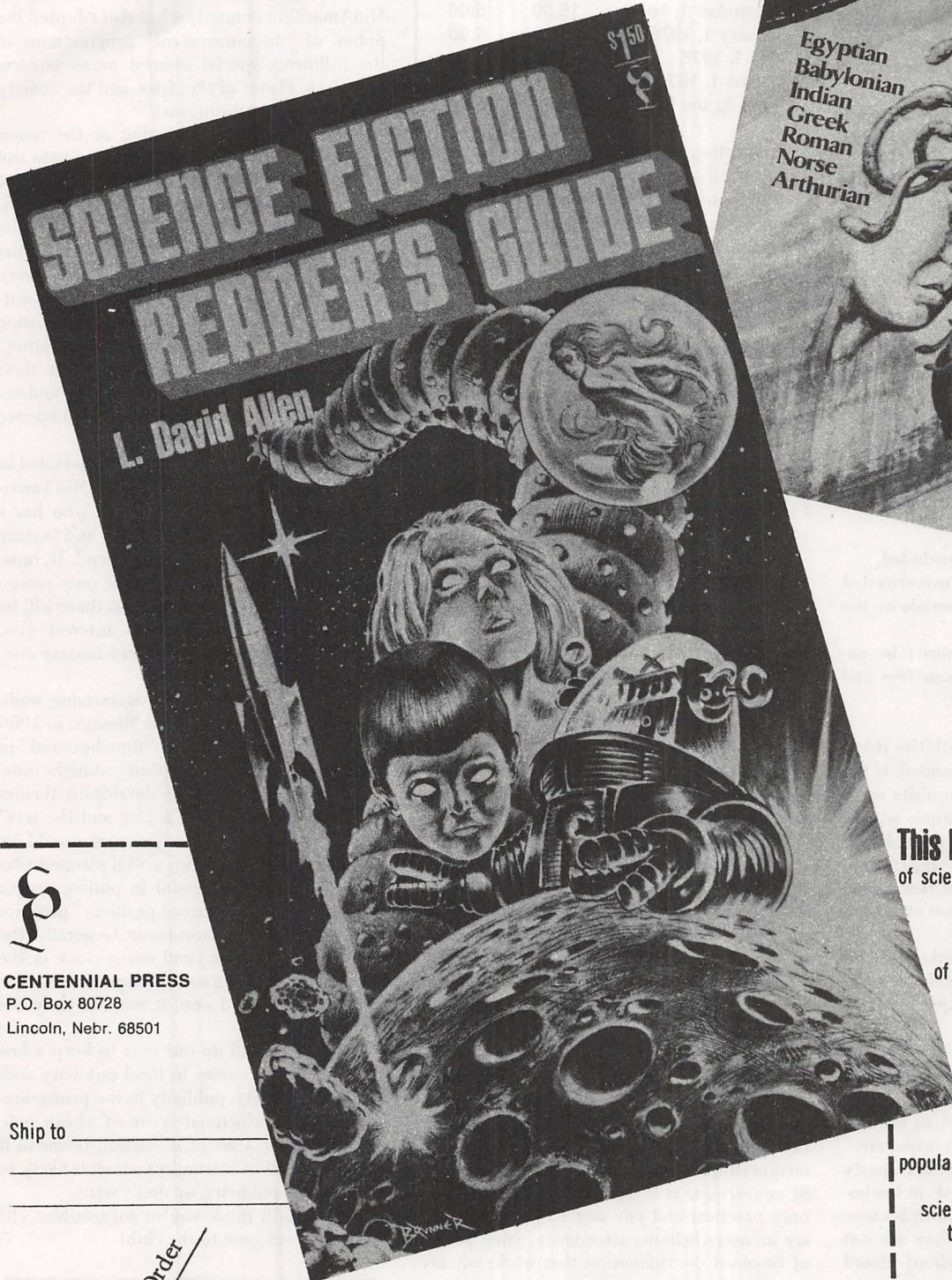
Finally, we will do our best to keep a low profile when it comes to local publicity and, more importantly, publicity in the professional SF field. Unfortunately, most of our policies will create a bit of discussion (some of it heated, and all of it lengthy) which is likely to generate the publicity we don't want.

So, you still think you've got troubles, eh? Well, Ace, welcome to the club! □



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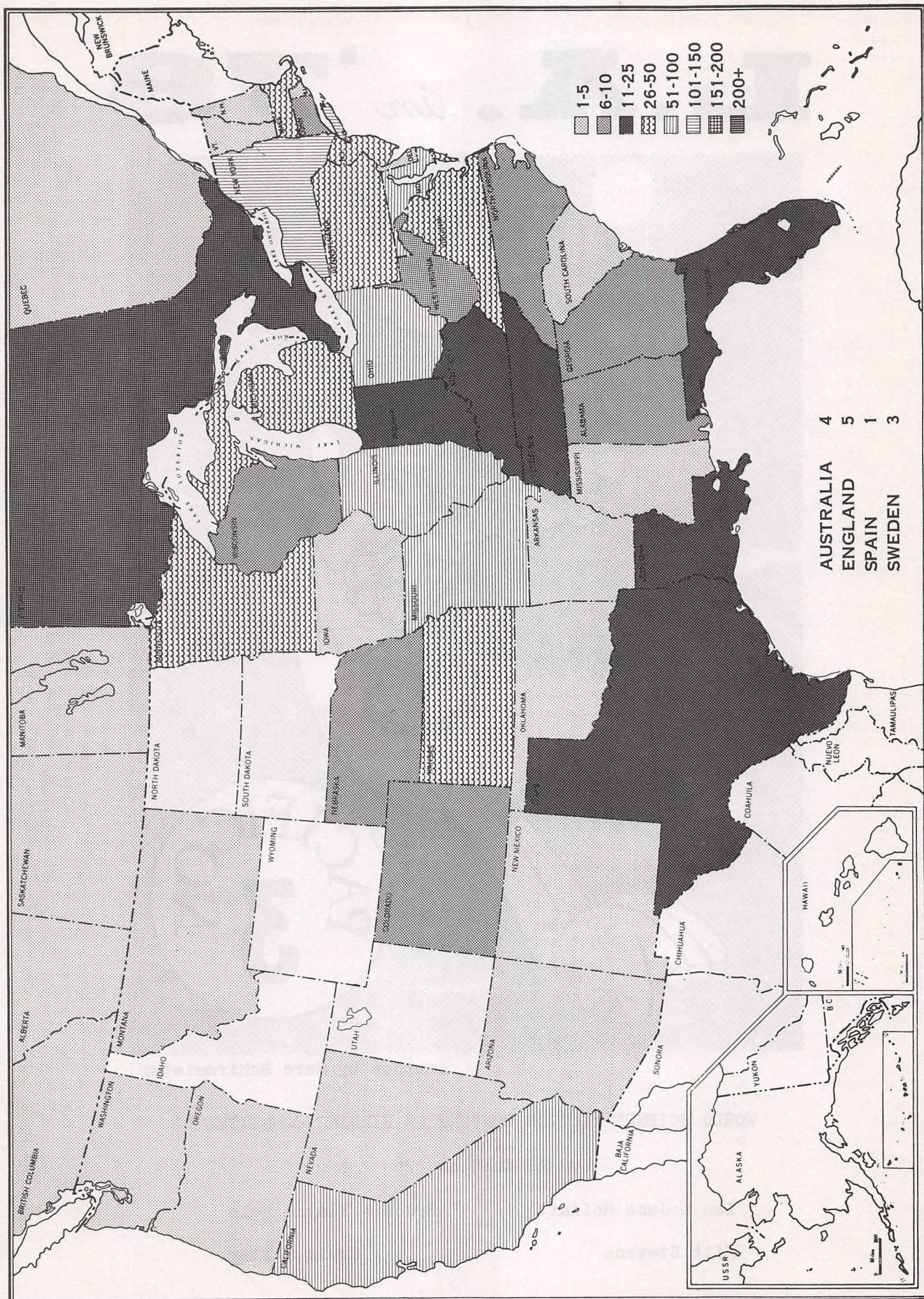
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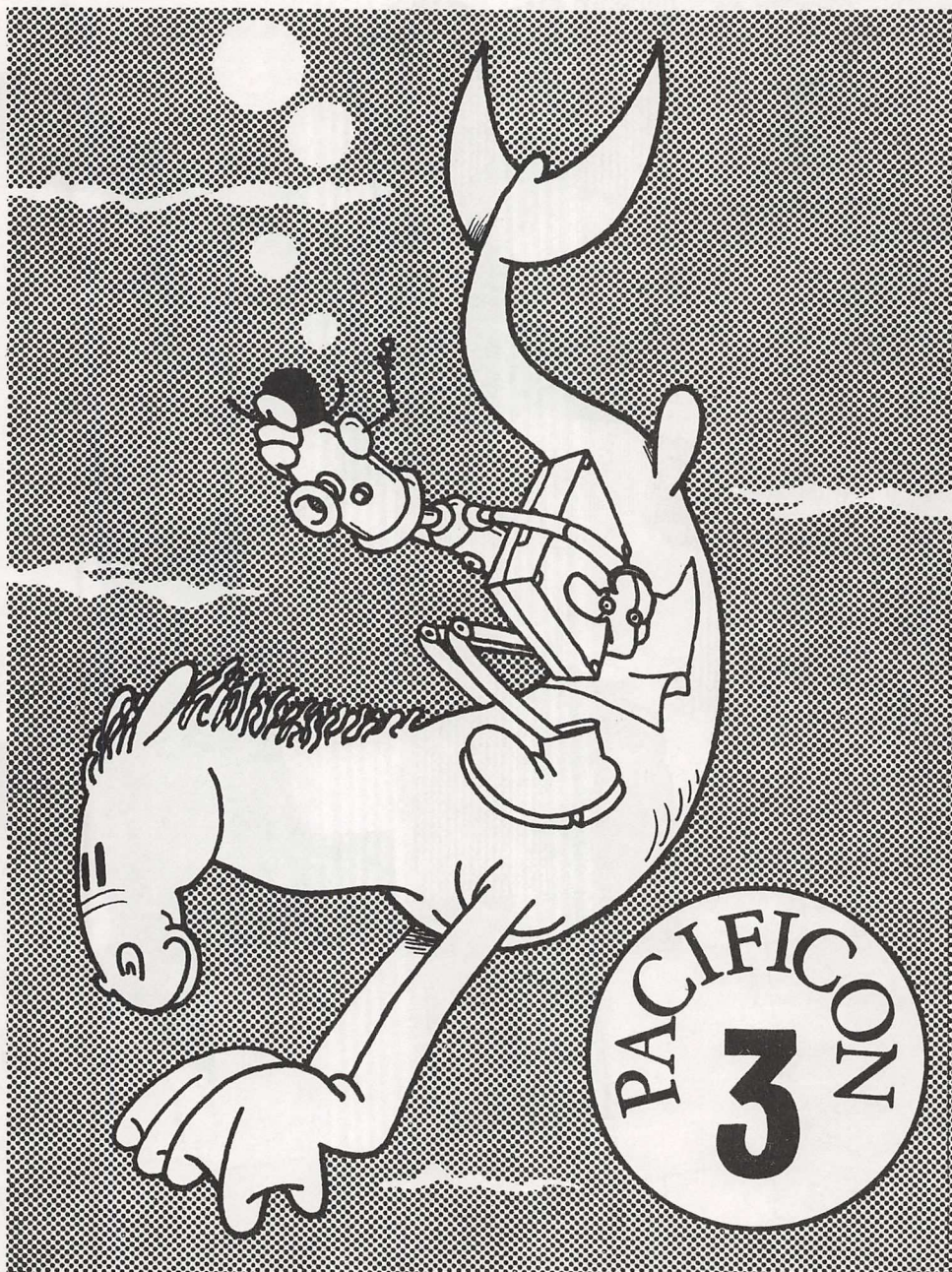
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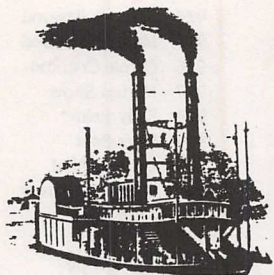
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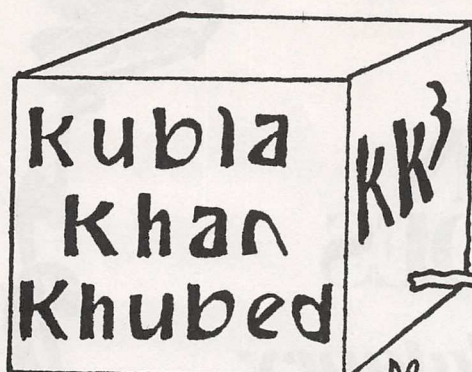
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WORLD CON MASQUERADES

The Subtle Art of Blatancy

by Mike Resnick

It was while photographing the LACon masquerade in 1972 that it hit me: here I was, thousands of miles from home, sweating to death in a jacket and tie, fighting other camera buffs for a favored spot, and listening to some pompous ass from the con committee threatening to throw us all out of the building if we didn't let him take his pictures first. I looked groggily across the room and saw some joker in a costume, cool and relaxed, without another soul nearer than 30 feet.

I think it was at that instant that I decided I had been on the uncomfortable end of the camera long enough, and took a mildly solemn vow to become a costume freak. So we—Carol, my wife, had precious little choice in the matter—began to do our homework. For starters, we studied some 700 slides I had taken during the previous ten worldcons. Then we attended a couple of costume workshops at regional cons, and spoke to a number of the perennial winners about their methods and theories.

Based on our “research” we came up with certain general axioms, which have thus far worked well enough to keep us undefeated at recent worldcon masquerades and has resulted in my being asked to share them with you. This I shall do forthwith:

Authors. The very first thing we realized was that certain authors' characters rarely if ever win, regardless of the excellence of the costumes. Included among these are Edgar Rice Burroughs, Robert E. Howard and H.P. Lovecraft. (It also happens that they outsell just about every other author in the field—from which you may draw whatever conclusions you choose.)

An even more unhappy fact is that precious few authors have evinced any desire to de-

scribe the dress of their characters; and most of those who do are either unimaginative, or at least un-reproducible.

What remains is a small handful of fantasy authors who give flavorsome descriptions of guys, gals, and BEMS: Jack Vance, C.L. Moore, A. Merritt, Clark Ashton Smith, and a few others. The field is by no means limited to these authors, but they offer the greatest quantity of source material.

Topicality. We feel there are too many disadvantages in doing costumes from a current book. First, most of the audience—and probably most of the judges, as well—usually have not read it. Second, those who have read it have probably formed their own very fresh and recent impressions of the way the characters look, and in their case you'd better not vary too many iotas from the author's description (or their interpretation of same).

No-No's. Absolutely verboten is whatever seems to be the rage. That includes Mr. Spock; anyone from above, on, or beneath the Planet of the Apes; Vampirella; any Creative Anachronists; and after Discon, I feel we can add Celtic warriors and dancing girls to the list. Based on the results, I'd say the judges seem to agree with me on this point.

Visual Media. Taking a character from a painting, a movie or a comic strip has been done very well on occasion—most notably by The Snake Mother (Tricon, 1966) and The Black Queen from *Barbarella* (LACon, 1972)—but usually the efforts at exact duplication fall short. A number of Barbarellas, wearing well-done, sexy, exotic costumes lost simply because they didn't look like Jane Fonda.

Characters. I would suggest that you seek out some character who is not completely and intricately described, so as to allow you some creative license. A very definite plus are char-



acters who are so distinctive they can be recognized without your having to explain what your costume represents. Such characters are rare, but they do exist: Chun the Unavoidable, The Snake Mother, Shamblau. . . to name just a few.

Presentations. In well over a decade of attending masquerades, I have never seen a truly effective verbal presentation—and with good reason: If you're not Fritz Leiber, you simply haven't got the ability to project your voice. (Friends of Sam Moskowitz may debate this, but I'm speaking in a dramatic context.) Another major drawback is that, except for humorous or fannish presentations, the audience is required to have a somewhat intimate knowledge of the book from which the scene has been excerpted. At any rate, the really memorable presentations—the Andersons' "Bat and the Bitten" (St.Louiscon, 1969), or any of Jon and Joni Stopa's—have always been visual and not verbal.

Detail. Lord knows you want to be as authentic as possible, and certainly pre-judging allows the judging panel to see all the fine and delicate handiwork that went into your costume—but you must never forget that you will be appearing before a minimum of 3,000 people, most of whom will be so far away all your minute work will be lost to them. If you can be subtle and blatant at the same time, fine; if not, blatancy wins every time.

Nudity. Nude girls are nothing new at worldcon masquerades; I have a photo of one from the 1952 Chicon. However, they were usually exhibitionistic costumes that delighted the audience and never won anything but a second run-through for the benefit of the male judges. Recently, things have changed, and LACon, Torcon, and Discon II had a number of truly superb costumes utilizing nudity, demonstrating not once but many times over that if the nudity is an integral part of the costume rather than the other way around, it can be effective enough to win. After all, other things being equal, a lovely girl in a good costume that requires some nudity is nicer to look at than a lovely girl in a good costume that requires no nudity.

There has been no total male nudity, that I know of, but I suppose it can't be far away.

BEMs. There have been a few good ones in the past, and there will be again. However, since Hollywood, with its zillions of dollars and masters of make-up, creates so few real-looking BEMs, it's not too likely that you, an amateur costume-maker, can do so on your own.

Women's Clothing. The bulk of descriptions in sf stories fall into one of three categories: a—total or near-total nudity (guaranteed to receive applause, but not much else unless handled very creatively; b—slave girls/barbarian girls (available for \$9.95 from Frederick's of Hollywood, and guaranteed to please but lose; and c—robes, veils, smocks, and anything else that most authors use to imply novel and futuristic clothing, but which all too often show a paucity of imagination on the part of the author. There are many things in category

C to choose from, and millions to leave alone; the main thing is to make sure that the costume doesn't look like a made-over dress. No matter how much gobbledegook and gingerbread a girl puts on an old dress or robe, it almost always winds up looking like an old dress or robe with gobbledegook and gingerbread added.

Men's Clothing. Even a poorer source than women's clothing. All barbarians don't wear furs and miniskirts, all heroes don't wear capes, and most costumers don't remember those two facts.

Figures. It's important to be realistic when appraising your figure. A skinny, flat-chested girl shouldn't be playing Barbarella any more than a balding, paunchy gentleman should try to convince the world that he's really Kimball Kinnison.

Characterization. Most participants seem to feel that if they don't have a presentation to give they need merely walk across the stage and let it go at that. Wrong. Even if you're not reciting lines or going through a routine, you *are* impersonating a character, so make every effort to *become* that character. If you are a fleshpot, slink; if you are a barbarian, swagger; if you're a wicked witch, slouch and leer. It really does make a difference.

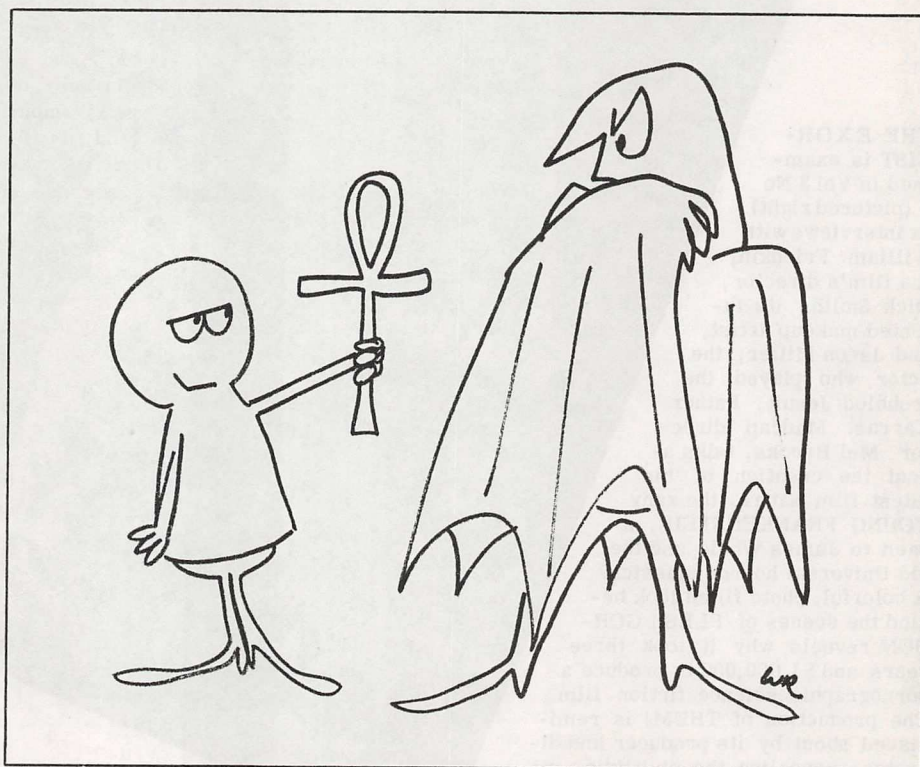
Movement. Costumes are made to be worn as well as photographed. Make sure yours doesn't hang stiffly and awkwardly, and keep in mind that only a handful of people are going to see you do anything *but* moving across the stage.

Comfort. You will be in your costume anywhere from 4 to 8 hours, depending on how well or ineptly the masquerade is run. Therefore, it would be wise to keep that in mind when designing what you must wear during

that time. More than one poor soul has fainted from heat, lack of oxygen, and/or other problems, and a hell of a lot of naked and near-naked people have sweated off their body-paint before ever getting on the stage. (Practicing all this at home sure doesn't hurt.)

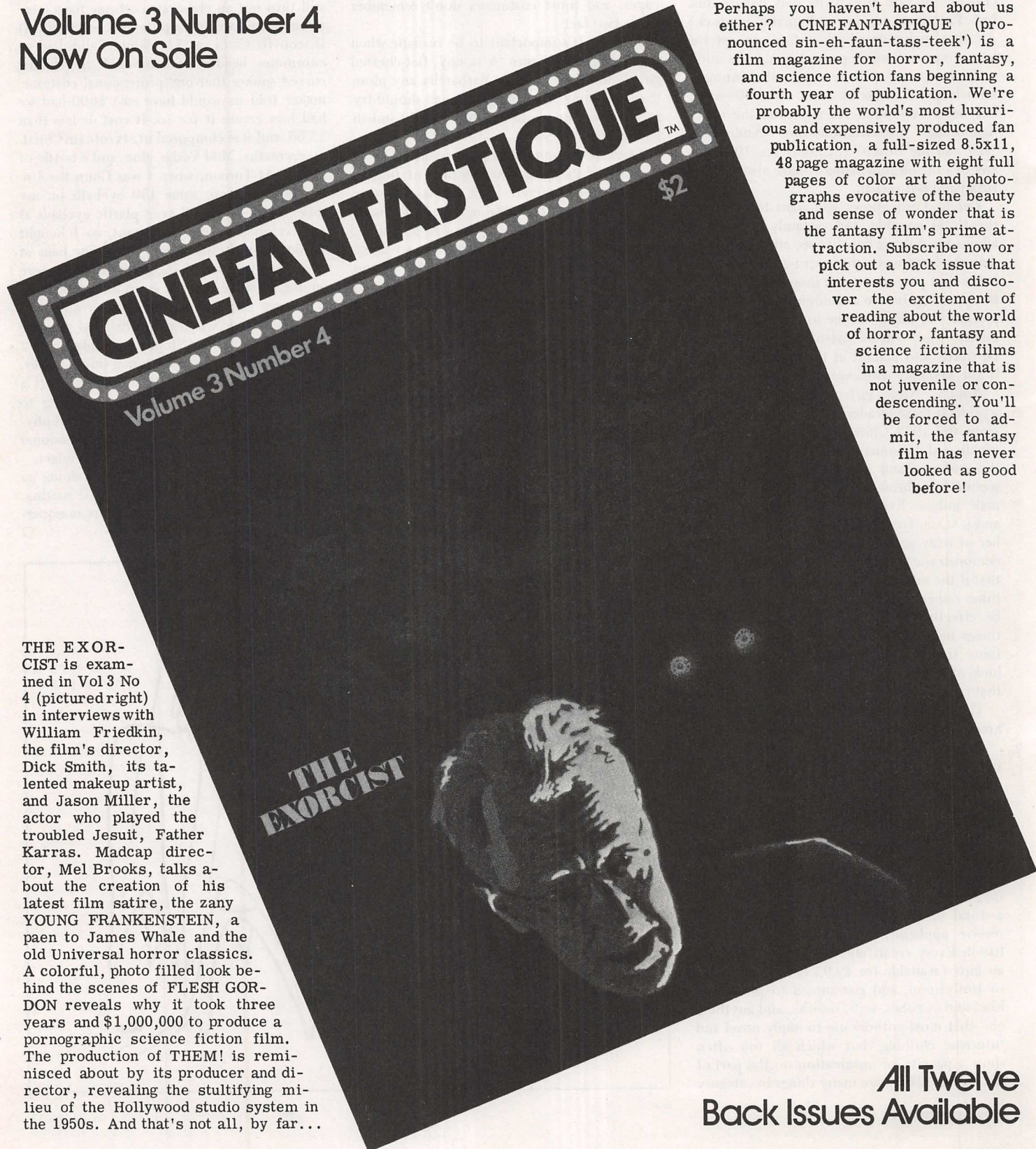
\$\$\$ As worldcon masquerades have become more and more sophisticated, the average winning costume has doubtless increased in cost. However, if you don't charge yourself for the eons you spend working on it, you can still turn out an elaborate costume for a mere pittance (or two mere pittances, anyway). At Discon II, Carol, as The White Sybil, had an enormous headdress composed of shining curved spokes that one professional costume-maker told us would have cost \$600 had we had him create it for us. It cost us less than \$5.00, and was composed of styrofoam Christmas wreaths, Mod Podge glue, and a bottle of glitter. At Torcon, when I was Chun the Unavoidable, I wore some 150 eyeballs on my robe. Glass eyes—and even plastic eyeballs at novelty shops—were exorbitant, so I bought 13 boxes of factory-reject ping-pong balls at 20 cents for a box of 12, spent 30 cents more buying stick-on dots for irises and pupils at a stationery store, and spent another dollar on picture-hanging wire with which to suspend the "eyeballs." The Stopas probably haven't spent \$250 on *all* their costumes put together, and they've won prizes at more than half a dozen worldcons. So yes, if you're willing to put in the proper amount of mental and physical effort, you can turn out an occasional minor masterpiece within a pauper's budget.

And I would suggest you begin doing so immediately. The way attendance is soaring, the only sure way to see any future masquerade is to be a part of it! □



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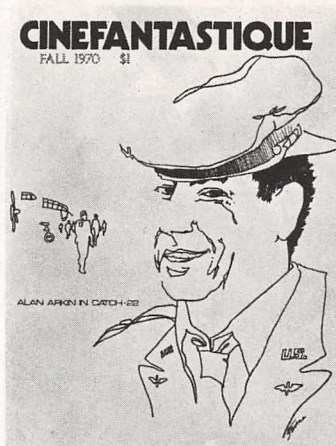
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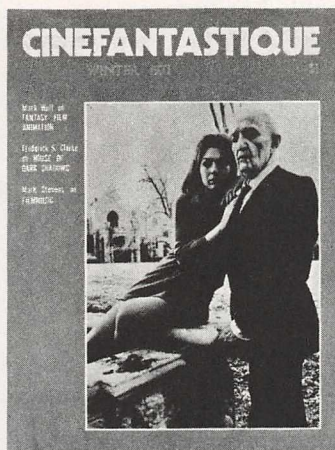
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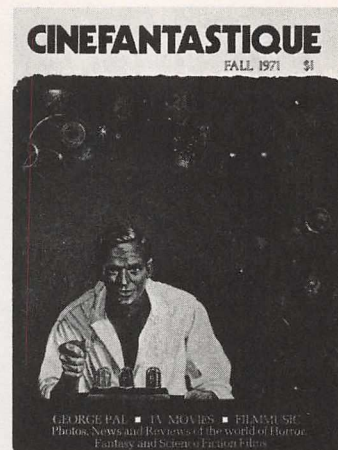
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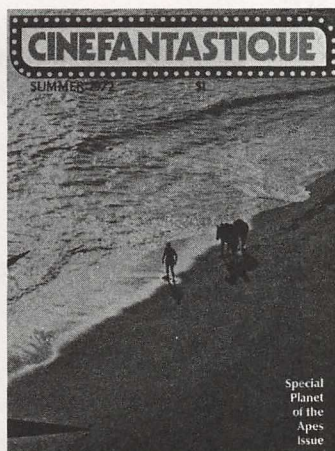
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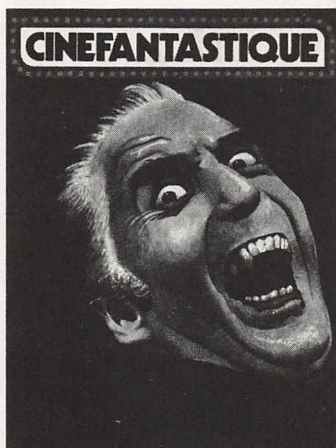
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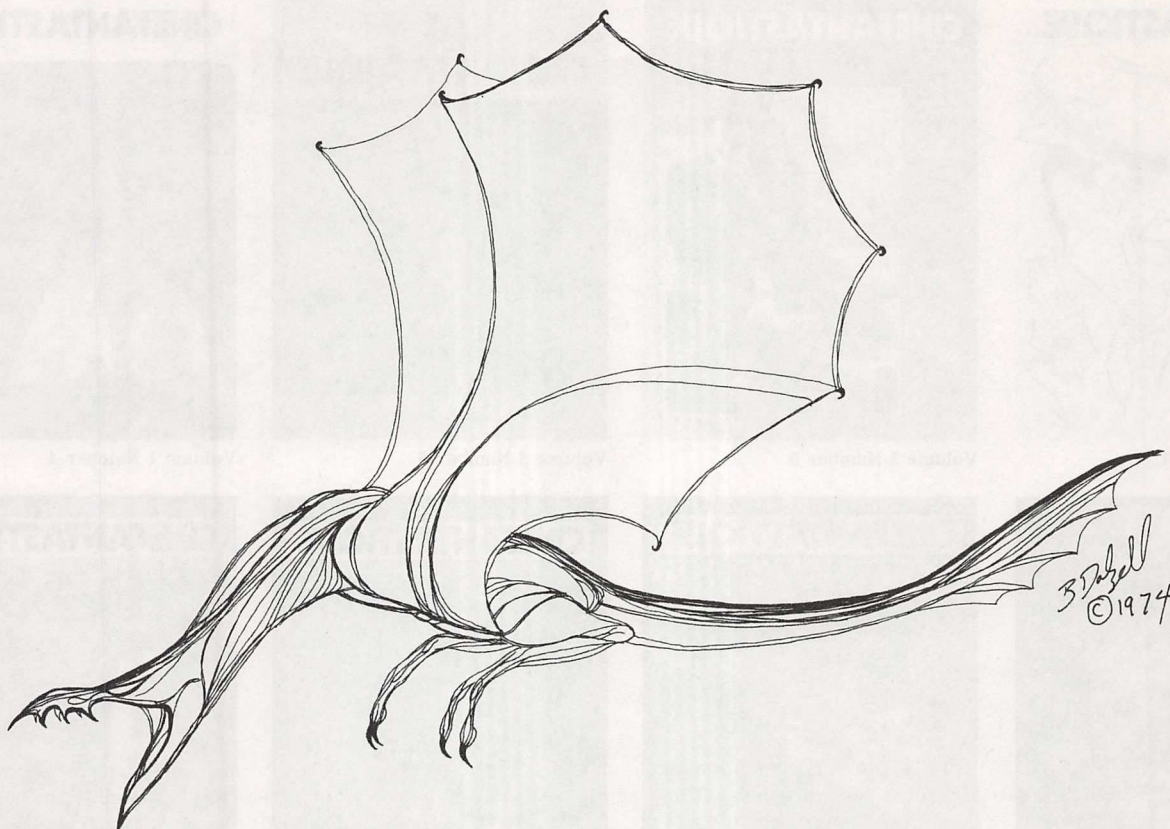
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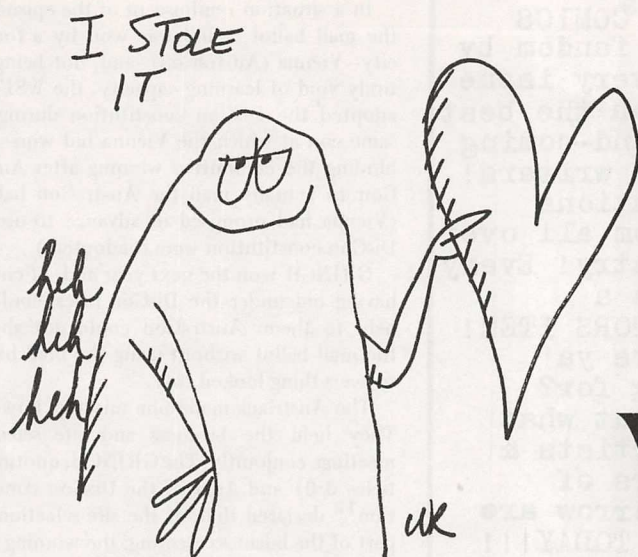
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How the GRINCH Stole Worldcon

In which Bill "The Galactic" Fesselmeyer takes potshots at Practically Everybody

REPORT OF THE SPECULATIVE FICTION RESEARCH SOCIETY TO THE 10th WORLD SPECULATIVE FICTION CONFAB ON THE SUBJECT OF ADOPTING A CONSTITUTION

The sudden demise of "fandom," the predecessor of the enthusiast state so many years ago, can be traced directly to the Constitution of the World Science Fiction Society—or rather to the multitude of mutually contradictory and ambiguous constitutions adopted. In fact, one of the few coherent stories that comes down to us from the even fewer survivors of that period immediately before "All Fandom Was Plunged Into War"¹ is the rather bizarre episode of the mail ballot that never got mailed.

In order to explain the various crises caused by the constitution it is necessary to understand that, although most of the time there were three current constitutions in effect, there was never a constitution to which a convention committee could be bound.

This sad state of affairs arose because a convention site was chosen two years before it was held. The convention committee was supposedly bound only by the rules in effect when they made their bid. However, in the same year they won the right to host a "worldcon," a new constitution—or parts thereof—would be adopted. Also, the next year, at the intervening convention, still another would be adopted, superseding all previous constitutions. By the time the convention was held there were three different constitutions in effect.²

It was not uncommon for a provision to be voted in one year and immediately voted out the next—before it ever became operative in the third year. (Convention committees in the first and second years following would de-

clare that the rule was adopted after they won their bids so they were, therefore, not bound to obey it as they had pledged to uphold only the constitution in effect when they won.) If, however, a committee liked something in the new constitution that was contrary to the constitution in effect when they won, they would merely declare that, as long as it had been approved anyway, the fans were entitled to have their legally voted wishes carried out at the earliest opportunity.

The converse was also true—if a procedure was out, the committee could still use it, claiming that it was permissible when they won the bid.³

Eventually this state of affairs became so chaotic convention committees were using parts of all three (or four) pertinent constitutions they liked, and refusing to be bound by portions they didn't. Toward the end, one committee simply declared that the three constitutions in effect had mutually conflicting provisions, so they had no other choice but to use their own best judgement. They then proceeded to do all sorts of things not provided for in any of the constitutions—and several that were prohibited by at least two of them.⁴

Keeping in mind, then, this system of constitutional anarchy, this is the story of the mail ballot that was never mailed—and how it led to the GRINCH stealing worldcon.

In 1974, at DisCon in Washington D.C., a Kansas City group won the right to host the worldcon in 1976. They, however, were bidding under the constitution adopted the year before in Toronto. At the DisCon business session a constitutional amendment was adopted to the effect that any future "perfected proposals" approved at a business meeting had to then be submitted for ratification to the membership of the next following convention. It also specified that this was to be

done by mail, and that the next following committee was responsible for counting the ballots before such proposals could become effective.

It may be noted that a small group of people rammed this amendment through the poorly attended business meeting by a vote of 32-22.⁵ This amendment was apparently motivated by the fact that the next convention was to be held in Australia, thus out of the reach (and control) of most U.S. fans who could not afford to attend in person.

The Australians, by every account nice people and well-liked by all, were not slow to see that this move was directed at them, and decided to use the new constitution adopted at DisCon. Accordingly, they sent the amendments approved at their business meeting to MAC (Kansas City apparently did not make a pleasing acronym, so it was called MidAmeriCon, or MAC) to be ratified by mail ballot.⁶ MAC promptly shipped them back, saying the rule was not in effect when it had bid, and it had no intention of conducting such a mail

1 It is odd how they all used the exact same phrase.

2 Plus, in some aspects, such as financial reporting after the convention, they might be affected by anything passed at their own convention, bringing the total number of operative constitutions up to four.

3 This was, of course, all perfectly legal.

4 One committee, for example, awarded itself the Hugo for best "fanzine" in the previous year for its own Progress Reports.

5 This amendment ironically provided that no longer could a small group of people ram an amendment through a poorly attended business meeting.

6 Aussiecon had printed the ballots at their own expense, even.



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ballot.

Furthermore, MAC informed Aussiecon, it wouldn't consider approval by the Aussiecon business meeting enough for adoption; the constitution the Australians elected to use clearly stated that a mail ballot had to be conducted for ratification. It was also their opinion that Aussiecon was incompetent to run their own mail ballot as the constitution stated that the next committee had that responsibility. The only concrete suggestion they had was that Aussiecon pass the mail ballot on to the 1977 convention. The 1977 committee would be obligated by the DisCon rules as those were the rules in effect when that committee bid, and that no changes could be allowed until the Aussiecon ballots could be mailed for ratification.

The Aussies thought this was pretty silly, but consented to do so in order to fulfill their obligations under the constitution they had chosen.

The problem came when the business meeting at MAC⁷ repealed the mail ballot requirement.

The 1977 committee had grudgingly accepted the ballots for ratification, but delayed mailing them until the last possible moment.⁸ The 1977 Hugo ballots were not mailed until after MAC; the 1977 committee decided (following fannish tradition) to abandon the DisCon constitution and adopt the MAC constitution; they returned the ballot to Aussiecon.

In a desperate gamble the Aussiecon committee forwarded their amendments to the

winning committee (1978) at MAC, only to have them returned with a note to the effect that, as the mail ballot had been repealed, they were not going to waste time and money on two-year-old amendments that had already been superseded by the MAC constitution—under which they had elected to operate.

At this point the Australians, in disgust, put all the profits from Aussiecon into a trust fund. The purpose of the fund was to send the ballots to every World Science Fiction Convention Committee in perpetuity until one of them consented to mail it. The second generation of Trust Fund Administrators is still mailing them out, year after year, to each succeeding World Speculative Fiction Confab Board of Governors, apparently believing them to be the heirs to the Worldcons.

That is why today the mere mention of how the mail ballot counting is coming will send old-time spec-fic enthusiasts into fits of laughter. BOGs of Confabs refuse to waste their time and money on such an antiquated mail ballot—besides, it has become somewhat of a enthusiast tradition: no winning BOG feels official until it gets the ballots from the Australian solicitors.⁹

This, then, was the state of affairs before "all fandom was plunged into war," a war which achieved almost 100% casualties, either through "fafia" or "gafia." Because of the state of confusion regarding the WSFS constitution, one committee was actually able to "steal" the Worldcon—the GRINCH (Grand Island, Nebraska, CHonvention).¹¹

In a situation reminiscent of the episode of the mail ballot, a bid was won by a foreign city—Vienna (AustraCon)—and, not being entirely void of learning capacity, the WSFS re-adopted the DisCon constitution during the same con at which the Vienna bid won—thus binding the committee winning after AustraCon to actually mail the AustraCon ballots. (Vienna had promised in advance to use the DisCon constitution were it adopted.)

GRINCH won the next year and, of course, having bid under the DisCon rules, could be held to them. AustraCon could not abolish the mail ballot without using the mail ballot, so everything looked rosy.

The Austrians made one mistake, however. They held the business and site selection meetings conjointly. The GRINCH, quoting articles 3:01 and 4:01 of the DisCon constitution¹² declared that, as the site selection was part of the business meeting, the winning city, Newark, had to be ratified by mail balloting of the GRINCH members.¹³

An Austrian court held that "Moved—Newark hold the Worldcon in. . ." was indeed a perfected proposal and must be submitted to the GRINCH members. The court also prohibited AustraCon from disbursing funds to Newark until after the mail ballot.

There was already considerable ill feeling between the GRINCH committee and the Newark committee, and this is the act that "plunged all fandom into war." At that time a very large number of people were involved in a culty sub-movement centered around a television show *Lost in Space*. Thusiasts of straight spec-fic felt these so-called "spacies" were not interested in the rest of the spec-fic genre or in the convention as a whole, but

7 MAC was still operating under rules not requiring a mail ballot to amend the constitution.

8 (4:01) Such perfected proposals, if approved by a majority of those present, shall be submitted by mail ballot to the entire membership of the Society by the next following committee, no later than the nomination ballot for Hugo awards, for ratification or rejection by a majority of those voting.

9 Perhaps similar to the tradition the Worldcons had of passing the gavel.

10 FAFIA: Forced away from it all; GAFIA: Getting away from it all.

11 CHonvention is sic; fans would often put an H in an inappropriate place, such as chonvention or "can of bheer"—in a moment of levity, the SFRS voted to consider sticking an H in a can of beer worse than sticking in a straw.

12 (3:01) The Society shall choose the location of the Convention to be held two years hence at a meeting held at an advertised time during each World Science Fiction Convention. (4:01) The Society shall conduct business at a meeting held at an advertised time during each World Science Fiction Convention.

13 See footnote 8.

were coming to the Worldcons in such numbers as to make the cons overcrowded and unmanageable.¹⁴

The GRINCH committee shared this feeling and had already stated there would be no spacie programming allowed at their convention. Needless to say, this announcement had crystallized resentment among the spacies, or "spacetics," as they preferred to call themselves, who had put together the Newark bid and had won. It is obvious that very few spacies had bought memberships to GRINCH which, although not excluding them, had little to attract those not interested in mainstream spec-fic. They were then faced with the fact that anti-spacies would have the right and power to ratify or reject the Newark bid. Spacies immediately began joining GRINCH (and at a substantially higher price because of an escalating schedule of rates). In fact, they mounted such a campaign to save Newark it is estimated that in one month they doubled the total membership, and quadrupled the treasury.

GRINCH infuriated the spacies by the simple tactic of delaying the registration of all these new members until after the mail ballot was rushed out, returned, and counted. It was a rare spacie, indeed, who was allowed to vote on the Newark question.

A U.S. Federal Court declared that there was nothing in the constitution that required the GRINCH committee to register people promptly, and that sending out the mail ballot was allowed by the DisCon constitution.

More than a little annoyed at the personal harassment (not to mention the law suits) directed their way by the spacies, GRINCH refused to refund any membership fees. Furthermore, when it found that several spacies had stopped payment on their checks, they prosecuted. Courts at all levels held that they had every right to do so. There are legends of convicted spacies publishing "fanzines" from their cells.

The Austrian court was persuaded to turn over the funds which would have gone to the winning bidder under section 3:05 of the DisCon constitution.¹⁵ An appeal by Newark was unsuccessful.

Newark next got a show cause order why

14 It was said that some spacies would travel half way across the country to see an episode for the 123rd time.

15 With sites being selected two years in advance, there are therefore at least two Convention Committees in existence. If one should become unable to perform its duties, the surviving Convention Committee shall determine what to do, by mail poll of the Society if there is time for one, or by decision of the Committee if there is not.

16 Instead of two years with another convention intervening.

17 "If ratified, the amendment shall take effect at the end of the next convention, unless the Committee of that Convention (which is administering this mail ballot) chooses to make it effective when the vote is tallied."

GRINCH should not poll the Society by mail. GRINCH had it quashed with a two-fold defense: first, that GRINCH was then only a couple of months away and there was no time, and second, that a lot of their time was being taken up answering Newark's other law suits. The court agreed that time indeed did not allow and that the GRINCH committee should (under the rules of the constitution) decide what to do about the next year's convention.

Of course, it decided that GRINCH II was in order and immediately booked a hotel—but not as large as the one they were using for GRINCH I. Then they announced that, based on advance registration for GRINCH I (over half of which were spacies who had bought supporting memberships in an effort to save Newark), the facilities were not large enough to host a convention with unlimited attendance. They chose to limit it, with the exception of those who had already bought full memberships to GRINCH II, to "By Invitation Only."

After another trip to court, it was decided that, as GRINCH I had the responsibility for throwing the disrupted convention, the committee could not be reasonably expected to choose a site outside its own area, and that they had made a binding contract with the hotel. The courts also held that a suit to prohibit GRINCH II from being "By Invitation Only" was without merit as virtually all conventions operated under such an arrangement.

While most of these actions were still in court, GRINCH I took place. Almost no spacie sympathizers attended and, as a result, the GRINCH business session passed a completely new constitution. The new constitution did away with the geographical rotation plan for Worldcon sites; abandoned the mail ballot for site selection; decreed that the site selection would be one year before the convention was held¹⁶; and did away with the mail ratification of the actions of business meetings.

As was to be expected—because of the extremely large spacie membership in GRINCH I—the site selected for the next convention after GRINCH II was for another spacie bid: this time in Los Angeles (LosTCon). The mail ballot ran 14 to 1 in favor of the Los Angeles site. However, GRINCH I followed the lead of AustraCon and held the site selection and business meetings jointly—which gave them the right to have LosTCon ratified by the membership of GRINCH II.

As the membership of GRINCH II was "By Invitation Only"—plus those who had bought memberships at GRINCH I (which included only a handful of spacies)—all the amendments were ratified, with the exception, to the surprise of absolutely no one, of LosTCon. This again threw the responsibility of arranging the next Worldcon onto the shoulders of the surviving committee: GRINCH II. As the mail ballot had not been sent out until the last possible moment, and had not been counted until late in the summer, the Federal Court once again ruled that time did not allow for the polling of the Society, and that

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the surviving committee should make the decision.

GRINCH II chose to make the constitution adopted at GRINCH I effective immediately, as per article 4:01¹⁷ of the DisCon constitution, and announced that elections would be held at GRINCH II to see where the next Worldcon site would be.

To back up for a moment, another significant event took place which was, as the old expression goes, "the last straw" in the demise of fandom. At the same time GRINCH I

was being held in Grand Island the species, to protest what they considered to be high-handed treatment by the GRINCH committee, organized a "RumpCon" in Newark. Some rather nasty things were said about GRINCH at RumpCon, both by the committee as a whole and by individual members. Some of these remarks were printed in the daily convention publication in a sort of inquiring reporter column.

As a result, the GRINCH committee sued the RumpCon committee, the authors of the remarks, and every registered member of RumpCon for libel and slander. The courts held that, as an unincorporated body, the members of RumpCon were individually and collectively liable for damages, which was assessed at a very modest \$1,000 a head. However, the membership of RumpCon was slightly more than 20,000, which brought the total value of the judgement to more than twenty million dollars! The amazing part is that GRINCH did collect 15 million dollars.¹⁸ The other five million was used as bargaining power against the other attendees, who had to sign an agreement never to write, publish, sell, or attend anything having to do with *Lost in Space* again. This fatiated almost the entire spacie movement, and did fatiate every publishing spacie, leaving the remainder of the cult with no means of contact.¹⁹

At GRINCH II even those species who had bought full memberships at GRINCH I, and were eligible to attend, did not show up. As a result the membership consisted almost entirely of those who had received invitations. GRINCH I passed on all its surplus funds (which exceeded 15 million dollars, as the committee members magnanimously donated

their shares of the damage settlement to the convention). It is said that GRINCH II was the most lavish Worldcon ever. The sole surviving member that we have been able to locate, one Bob Tucker, whenever asked about the GRINCH II strategy, will only make an arcane gesture and chant, "Smoooooooooth!"

At the site selection meeting, a surprise bid (although apparently known of by all the invited members) was made for Venezuela by a group that did not appear and who would identify itself only as "The Masters of Secret Fandom, Inc." The Venezuela bid won rather handily, and shocked the attendees by naming fifty professional guests of honor and two hundred fan guests of honor—for whom all expenses would be paid.

Of course, they had known in advance that the GRINCH II committee would pass on their surplus funds, which after convention expenses, still totalled almost 15 million dollars. The MoSF announced that MatildaCon²⁰ was to be by invitation only, as was GRINCH II. It later turned up in an examination of the incorporation papers of the Masters of Secret Fandom, Inc. that those august personages were none other than the GRINCH committee members.

The Masters of Secret Fandom, living up to their name, chose not to reveal even which city in Venezuela MatildaCon was to be held. They claimed that it was nobody's business but the members—and they would be told when they received their invitations.

The next year, known invitees to MatildaCon were asked where the next convention would be held. Their answers should by now be predictable: "If you are invited, you will be told."

MatildaCon was the last of the recorded Worldcons—after it, none was ever announced again. There were rumors that it had been dissolved, and there were rumors that it was still being held annually, but only invited members knew where—and they had to take a vow of secrecy or they would never be invited to another. In fact, there is a thusiast legend that the Masters of Secret Fandom still exist today, keeping an eye on us to see how we develop, and in the meantime are still holding the World Science Fiction Convention annually.²¹

Therefore, ladies and gentlemen of the 10th World Speculative Fiction Confab, the SFRS recommends that no constitution more complex than the one submitted should be adopted, for fear that the thusiast state, like all of fandom before it, be plunged into war.

Respectfully submitted,

E. E. Seuss

E. E. "Doc" Seuss

(Chairman of the committee to consider adopting a constitution.)

PROPOSED CONSTITUTION FOR THE WORLD SPECULATIVE FICTION SOCIETY

- Article I Do good.
- Article II Avoid evil.
- Article III Throw a confab.

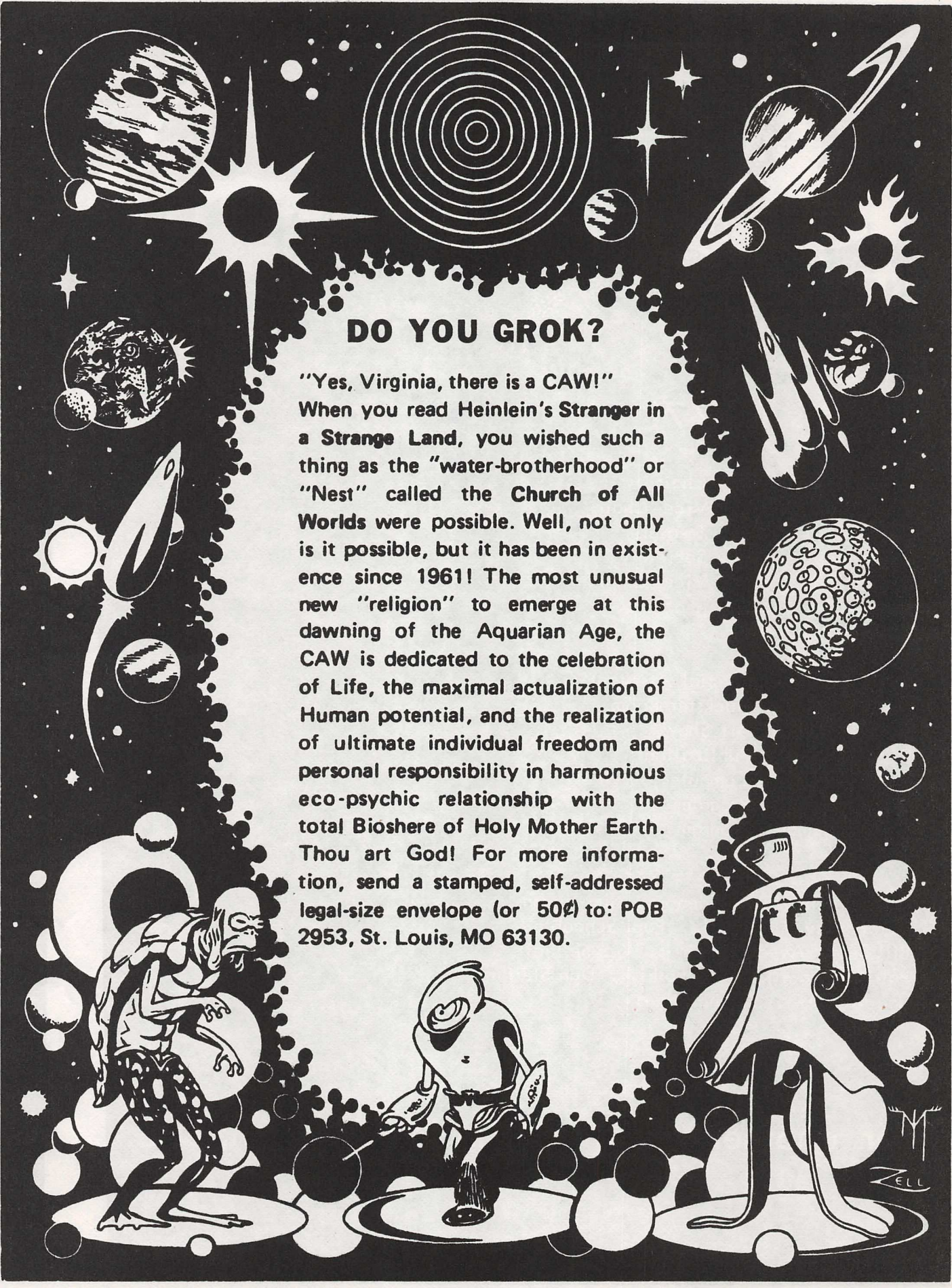
18 They settled with the insurance company of the studio that produced *Lost in Space*. According to SFRS investigation of old *TV Guides*, the program had been off the air for years, although a Saturday morning cartoon version was still on. That studio was foolish enough to have purchased a membership to RumpCon.

19 Stories have come down to us that some of the species switched their allegiance to another defunct TV show called *Star Trek*. Thusiasts find this too incredible to take seriously.

20 There never has been an adequate translation of that name into mundane, but one thusiast reports that there was a folk song popular in the 1950s and 60s to which the chorus went: "Matilda she take de money and run Venezuela!" If this is the reference for MatildaCon the MoSF were indeed adding insult to injury.

21 There is some slight proof that this might be true—Bob Tucker, last known survivor of GRINCH II, disappears for about a week every year around Labor Day and will say nothing about where he has been other than "Smoooooooooth!" Also, one thusiast who reprinted part of the libelous comments from RumpCon received a letter shortly thereafter saying that to knowingly repeat libel is libel, so desist or else. Interestingly enough, it was signed "The Masters of Secret Fandom" and was on paper that bore the "GRINCH XIX, The 75th World Science Fiction Convention" letterhead. Although it may have been a hoax, the thusiast desisted. □





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**An Illustrated History
of the
World Science Fiction
Convention**

Part 1

by Fred Patten

Introduction

In keeping with its promise to be a genuinely innovative Worldcon, MidAmeriCon is sponsoring a project to produce a history of the World Science Fiction Convention. This is not the first such project, but it's the most ambitious one to date.

Back in 1950, the NORWESCON (Portland) Program Book contained a one-page summary of the highlights of each of the preceding seven Worldcons. As the number of Worldcons has increased, the histories have grown fewer and sketchier, shrinking to a brief resumé of the Convention's origins or a list of "Worldcon traditions," until over the past decade most Program Books have included little more than the now-traditional one-page table of Past Worldcons. MidAmeriCon has decided it's time once again to tell the history of the Worldcon in a form with more meat and juices than just a skeletal collection of statistics. It is budgeting 40 or 50 pages for serialization in its Progress Reports and Program Book toward this goal.

Frankly, this history has been prompted in part by a growing number of complaints about inaccuracies in the tables of Past Worldcons. Chairmen have been mis-identified, Guests-of-Honor omitted, and attendance statistics in error more often than not. (For instance, every Program Book table of Past Worldcons has given the attendance of the 1958 Solacon

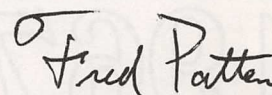
as an estimated 475, even though the Solacon's own Final Report clearly states the total as 322.) The MidAmeriCon Committee feels that it's high time that a new history is written, one that goes back to original verified sources to make sure it's correct.

But that's just a start. Ken Keller and Tom Reamy (speaking personally now, and not as MidAmeriCon Committee members) are planning to begin a new s-f fan press by 1976 (entitled "*The Nickelodeon Press*"), similar to such well-known houses as *Advent: Publishers* or *Mirage Press*. They are interested in publishing a history of the World Science Fiction Convention as one of their first works—an edition greatly expanded from this MidAmeriCon version, allotting six or more pages per Worldcon rather than only 1½ or two, and with many more illustrations. This MidAmeriCon version, then, can be considered only an outline, a first draft.

This is a call for help, for information. The history of the Worldcon currently lies scattered throughout almost 40 years' worth of old fanzine convention reports, photos in dusty personal albums, a few wire or tape recordings, some private correspondence, previous Worldcon Committee records (many of which have never been published because it was believed nobody would be interested in dull statistics). To make this book complete, we need to see and correlate as much of this

material as possible. If you have any fanzines containing old Worldcon reports or discussions of Worldcon politics, any old photos, any old newspaper clippings (remember that notorious "Zap! Zap! Atomic ray passé with fiends!" headline?), any old membership cards or attendance badges or promotional stickers that might make good illustrations, please contact us at the address below. Please write *before* sending what you've got; it may be a duplicate of something we already have.

We'd like to get it as soon as possible, for incorporation into this history for the MidAmeriCon publications. But when this edition is published, if you see errors or omissions, it is not too late to send us a correction for inclusion in the expanded book edition, which we currently hope to have published in time for distribution at the 1977 Worldcon. (It'll include a report of MidAmeriCon itself, of course.) We want to make this work *the* definitive history of the World Science Fiction Convention from 1939 to 1976.



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Prologue

Practically the entire history of science-fiction fandom is encompassed within the World Science Fiction Convention. This annual gathering reflects the whole sub-culture in miniature. It was conceived barely seven years after the birth of the s-f community and has grown up along with it. Virtually all of fandom's virtues, its faults, its idiosyncracies, and its personalities have interacted with the Worldcon in one way or another. After thirty-four years, the Worldcon has accumulated a history about itself that is worth the telling.

Science fiction fandom can fairly be said to have been born in 1930. Fantasy literature goes back much farther, of course. Historians have traced it back as far as the Babylonian epic of Gilgamesh. Modern s-f is usually reckoned from the time of Jules Verne and H. G. Wells. Such pulp authors as Edgar Rice Burroughs, George Allan England, and Ray Cummings popularized the genre during the first decades of the 20th century. But these scientific romances were mixed in popular fiction magazines along with sports stories, Westerns,

pirate tales, detective puzzlers, and similar light reading matter. There were doubtless readers who preferred the more fantastic adventures, but they remained isolated from each other and never considered themselves to be a special breed.

The foundation for s-f fandom was laid by magazine publisher Hugo Gernsback, who launched the first all-scientific-fiction magazine, *Amazing Stories*, in April 1926. Devotees of fantasy with a pseudoscientific facade quickly gravitated to *Amazing Stories*. The magazine soon began a letter column in which readers could discuss their likes and dislikes, debate the merits of their favorite authors, and argue the plausibility of the fictionalized science.

The success of *Amazing Stories* encouraged the creation of other magazines of scientific-fiction, which also featured letter columns. The first zealots of note were those readers who came to appear in the letter columns of all the magazines with regularity. Since names and addresses were also published, many of these readers began personal correspondences. It

soon became evident that most were boys in their teens, usually bookish and introverted in person but highly voluble on paper.

1930 saw the creation of the first s-f fan club, the Scienceers of New York City. Others soon followed. These were often as short-lived and volatile as high school social groups, which most of them essentially were.

1930 also saw the first publication of amateur s-f magazines such as *The Comet* and *The Planet*. These began basically as club newsletters, but they grew until by 1932, with *The Time Traveller*, they were imitation professional magazines filled with teenagers' attempts at fiction, illustrations, dignified editorials, articles, and letter columns. Practically every fan with access to a letterpress, a mimeograph, or a spirit duplicator began a magazine. Those who didn't contributed fiction or wrote to the letter columns of those who did. If it took three or four fans together to form a club, any isolated fan could write lots of letters or publish 50 or 100 copies of a fanzine. As soon as American pulps began to be exported to Britain and Australia, letters began

arriving from there as well. An appearance in a prozine letter column was almost sure to bring at least one sample copy of a fanzine or an offer to exchange correspondence.

From 1930 to 1933-34, the casual readers were separated from the active fans (or at least those interested in corresponding through letters or fanzines) and the sub-culture of s-f fandom began to establish itself.

By 1936 s-f fandom was a small but settled community. It consisted of about a hundred active fanzine publishers, correspondents, and club members in the U.S. and Canada, about twenty in Britain, and one or two in Australia, France, and Germany. The New York City/upper New Jersey area was the real hub of activity, partly because natural population density contributed to larger clubs, and partly because cities and towns were close enough together to make it practical for fans to visit each other.

But this was a mixed blessing. Fans of the 1930s were virtually all introverted teen-age intellectuals who combined a lack of social graces with an intolerant zeal toward their

particular interpretation of the goals of science-fiction. There were countless debates over whether fandom should concentrate on literary or popular-science projects, or whether fans should espouse such futuristic and progressive causes as Esperanto and reformed spelling. As long as these debates were limited to the pages of fanzines, they could be conducted in an even-tempered manner. But when fans got together in person, they inevitably led to factionalism. Clubs seldom grew above a dozen members before fragmenting in angry internal politics. One of the more dramatic events of early fandom was the New York Science Fiction League takeover of late 1935, when the "out" faction of the SFL burst into a meeting in progress of the East New York chapter, chased the Director from the room, and reconvened the meeting as the *new* New York branch of the International Scientific Association. The East Coast soon became known for the hyperactive but abrasive nature of its fandom.

The first s-f convention was held on Octo-

ber 22, 1936. The New York ISA chapter decided to hold some kind of social event, and Donald A. Wollheim suggested a get-together with some other city's club. A meeting with the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society was arranged, and on the given date seven ISA fans took a train to Philadelphia, where they were met by three PSFS fans.

The outing included an auto tour of Philadelphia's scenic spots, followed by an afternoon of socializing at PSFS Director Milton A. Rothman's home. It was more of a bull-session than anything else, except that Wollheim decided it should be called a convention and the others good-naturedly went along with him. Rothman accepted the title of chairman, and ISAer Frederik Pohl was delegated secretary to document the outing for posterity. Since it had been one of the biggest social events in fandom to date, a number of fanzines printed reports of it, duly crediting it as a convention. More importantly, before returning to New York, the ISA group decided to organize a proper convention of their own the following February.

Nycon New York-1939

This second American fan convention (the Leeds, England chapter of the SFL held the first formal s-f conference in January), at New York's Bohemian Hall, on February 22, 1937, drew thirty people including some local s-f editors, authors, and artists. The fans were so elated by its success that Wollheim proposed that fandom begin long-range planning for a convention to be held at the same time as New York's forthcoming World's Fair in 1939, where it might be possible to attract fans from all over the country and possibly even abroad. The suggestion was immediately approved by the attendees, and Wollheim was appointed chairman of a committee of four, including fans from Pennsylvania and Maryland to give it a widespread outlook, to organize such an affair.

The good feeling did not last. Two months later, the ISA split over President William S. Sykora's devotion to popular-science projects and Donald Wollheim's devotion to literary and fan-social activities. Wollheim published the final issue of the club's fanzine in June, putting all the blame for the ISA's demise on Sykora's head. Each went on to form new alliances, and the proposed 1939 convention was forgotten in the heat of more immediate fanac.

It was revived at the First National Science Fiction Convention, held in Newark, New Jersey on May 29, 1938. By this time several other s-f conferences had been held; fandom

had grown and alignments had shifted.

The National Convention was organized by Newark fan Sam Moskowitz, in association with Will Sykora. Wollheim was now a leader of New York's Committee for the Political Advancement of Science Fiction, which espoused the promotion of science-fiction for the betterment of mankind. Its articles were heavy with Communist-sounding rhetoric, which made it a very controversial group. At the National Convention, which was the largest conference to date, Sykora opened the proceedings by proposing that its success made it the logical organizer of the 1939 World Convention, and that its chairman (Moskowitz) be empowered to appoint a temporary committee to study such an event. The motion was tabled until later in the day to give attendees time to think it over.

During the day, Wollheim and John Michel went about selling copies of speeches they claimed the Moskowitz-Sykora dictatorship had suppressed from the program.

By the time the motion was reopened, Wollheim and Michel had managed to make themselves and the CPASF look too inflammatory to be trusted with a fandom-wide convention. Sykora, conducting the proceedings as acting chairman (Moskowitz had no experience with parliamentary procedure), persuaded the majority of the attendees to approve a motion officially disbanding Wollheim's earlier "do-nothing" committee and entrust himself with organizing a study committee to appoint a

permanent committee to manage the World Convention. Sykora appointed himself and Moskowitz as two of the members.

When David A. Kyle protested the complete freezeout of Wollheim's group, Sykora claimed that this was just a study committee which would select a permanent committee representing all factions. This did not satisfy Wollheim, who refused to recognize Sykora's authority. The day ended with Kyle circulating a petition in Wollheim's favor.

A little over a month later the Greater New York chapter of the Science Fiction League, to which Wollheim belonged and which was affiliated with the CPASF, declared itself the official sponsor of the 1939 World Convention under Wollheim's appointment, citing the 1937 "Second Eastern Regional Convention" (a title given in retrospect) resolution as its mandate. Sykora, who had no clique, got together with Sam Moskowitz and James V. Taurasi in July to form a new club, New Fandom, to organize the World Convention. Moskowitz erupted into such furious activity that within weeks New Fandom was an equal to the CPASF.

Moskowitz began two attractively-printed new fanzines, *Fantasy News* and *New Fandom*, which were sent to almost every fan in the country (circulation 200). He solicited contributions from popular fan writers, giving it a non-partisan air. He arranged for a merger with an existing club, the Science Fiction Advancement Association, adding the SFAA's



Nycon Program Book heading by Frank R. Paul, courtesy of Thrilling Wonder Stories.

members and favorable reputation to New Fandom. He announced that New Fandom had the goal of uniting all fans of good will into one brotherly organization, and that it was the successor of Sykora's study committee to organize the 1939 World Convention.

Both sides tried to rally fandom to their banner. New Fandom reorganized as the Queens, N.Y. chapter of the Science Fiction League so that it could claim to be managing the World Convention as an adjunct to the

venerable SFL. The CPASF reformed as the Futurian Science Literary Society, a much less controversial name.

It all came to a head at the next major conference, which was held in Philadelphia on October 16, 1938. Between 25 and 30 fans and pros were present. Sykora led a New Fandom delegation to present his case, while no Futurians were present. After some discussion, Jack Speer introduced a motion that the Philadelphia Conference go on record supporting

New Fandom as the official sponsor of the World Convention, which was passed. This doomed the Futurian hopes. Other clubs and organizations quickly announced support of the New Fandom committee, and John W. Campbell pledged *Astounding's* support to the New Fandom convention. The Futurians assumed the status of an out-of-office political party: lots of sound but no authority.

Now that the New Fandom bid had won approval, the Queens SFL chapter suddenly became the social center of New York fandom, swelling to an average attendance of 30 per meeting, with professional editors and authors as attendees. This made it easy for the Moskowitz-Sykora-Taurasi triumvirate to organize a program for the convention. Plans were announced on a grand scale. Regional representatives were appointed in fan clubs around the country to encourage attendance. The dates of July 2nd, 3rd, and 4th, 1939 were set so fans would have the whole July 4th holiday at their disposal. The committee announced it had received and *rejected* an offer of free meeting facilities within the World's Fair grounds, since attendees would still have to pay to enter the Fair, and the convention was to be absolutely free of charge to all.

As the convention approached, the Futurians continued to plead their case through their fanzines, citing the earlier claim of Wollheim's committee. The February 1939 issue of *Science Fiction Fan*, published by Denver's Olon F. Wiggins, editorialized that the New Fandom leaders were probably incapable of successfully running such a large event. When the committee announced it was renting the film *Metropolis*, which had been made in Germany, the Futurians denounced this as pouring fan money into Nazi coffers. These and similar statements allowed the Queens SFL to claim with some plausibility that since the Futurians had lost the convention, they were now trying to sabotage it.

The World Science Fiction Convention officially opened at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, July 2nd, 1939, at the Caravan Hall, a large, fourth-floor auditorium on East 59th Street near Park Avenue. The auditorium was decorated with original s-f cover paintings loaned by the magazines, and had a small refreshment stand selling soft drinks and 5-cent slices of pie.

A large gathering on the street waiting for the Hall to open included fans from California, Texas, Illinois, Virginia, and other states, many coming as "official delegates" of their local clubs. Forrest J Ackerman and Myrtle R. Douglas, from the Los Angeles SFL chap-

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Text of cardboard placard displayed in New York City just before the convention. Printed by Conrad H. Ruppert, a fan of the 1930s noted for the excellence of his publications.

ter wore futuristic costumes designed after those in the 1936 film *Things to Come*. There were also local news reporters and a man from *Time Magazine*.

The doors opened promptly at 10:00 to allow the fans in for the morning program, which was an informal get-together session. Fifteen attendees had published special issues of their fanzines for the convention, which were sold at a souvenir table.

Shortly after the Hall opened, most of the Futurians arrived in a group. Taurasi stopped them as they left the elevator and informed them that, due to their constant attempts to sabotage the convention, they would not be admitted. A heated argument followed, with Moskowitz supporting Taurasi (Sykora didn't arrive until later). Most of the neutral attendees disapproved of the exclusion since the convention had been advertised as free and open to all. The committee replied that this obviously should not include anyone who came to deliberately destroy the convention. Wollheim argued that they weren't such fools as to do anything that would unite fandom against the Futurians.

While this was going on, David A. Kyle had arrived and began handing out a pamphlet at the entrance to the Hall titled *A WARNING!* It urged the attendees not to let themselves be bullied by the "ruthless scoundrels" of the Queens SFL "dictatorship" into endorsing any resolutions that would allow the QSFL to succeed in its "carefully conceived plans." New arrivals had these in their hands as they emerged from the elevator into the argument. Taurasi and Moskowitz promptly cited them as evidence of the Futurians' bad faith.

The Futurians admitted it was dissent, but continued to deny any desire to disrupt or destroy the convention. Bystanders urged that the Futurians be given the benefit of the doubt, since if they *did* start any trouble they could then be ejected with the approval of all present.

The committee continued to refuse on the grounds that "we won't let them maneuver us into making ourselves look bad in front of the reporters" (the quote is an approximate reconstruction), which some felt showed an obsessive concern for the successful public image of the convention. Finally some of the Futurians were admitted after promising to behave, but the six that Moskowitz and Taurasi considered the most dangerous troublemakers (Donald A. Wollheim, John B. Michel, Frederik Pohl, Robert A. W. Lowndes, Cyril Kornbluth, and Jack Gillespie) were ordered to leave.

The exclusion caused general turmoil. Most attendees disagreed with it. The excludées hung around the Hall's entrance for some time, asking new arrivals to support their cause. Several did; author Jack Williamson, who came all the way from New Mexico, refused for some time to enter unless the excludées were allowed in.

Futurian Dave Kyle spread the word that a Futurian Conference would be held on July 4th at which nobody would be barred for any reason. Finally Chairman Sam Moskowitz end-

ed the commotion by calling the convention to order, about fifteen minutes after the official opening time of 2:00 p.m. The attendees, some still grumbling, took their seats and the convention began.

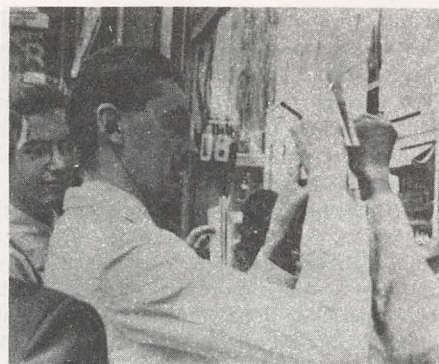
Moskowitz opened the convention as a successor to the National Convention of 1938 by giving a resume of its events, and appointed Raymond Van Houten as secretary of the World Convention so that its activities would be documented. He followed with a welcoming speech, pointing out that this was s-f fandom's fifth convention while readers of Westerns or mysteries had never organized any, and that those present included both fans and professionals from all over the country as well as representatives from every s-f magazine. He thanked everyone for their enthusiasm which had made the convention possible.

In the program that followed, Will Sykora urged fandom to unite behind progressive New Fandom; publisher Leo Margulies hinted at a forthcoming s-f magazine of his that fans were especially sure to enjoy (it turned out to be *Captain Future*); and Kenneth Sterling gave a promotional talk for a special memorial edition of H. P. Lovecraft's best stories that two fans were planning, *The Outsider and Others*. Guest-of-Honor Frank R. Paul spoke on "Science Fiction, the Spirit of Youth," claiming that readers of s-f showed themselves to be mentally young and progressive whatever their physical age might be, and that the literature was a constructive influence toward a greater world of tomorrow. This drew a huge ovation, which was followed by a similar ovation as Ray Cummings was introduced from the floor.

After a break while projection equipment was set up, *Metropolis* was shown. This was very well received, since it was legendary in fandom but few had had the opportunity to actually see it. John W. Campbell followed with a speech on s-f's need to keep evolving and advancing. Mort Weisinger chatted on "The Men of Science Fiction," giving humorous personal anecdotes about several popular authors. Moskowitz then turned the gavel over to Sykora, who introduced pro and fan notables in the audience, and read some letters and telegrams of congratulation to the convention. One of those introduced, Charles D. Hornig, made an extemporaneous speech on the future of s-f.

As Sykora was about to adjourn for dinner, David Kyle asked to be allowed to say a few words. Kyle spoke briefly about s-f, then pointed out that "six prominent fans" had been barred from the convention that day. He moved that they be admitted if they would promise not to cause any trouble. Leslie Perri promptly seconded this and called for a vote of the attendees. Sykora declared that no motions would be considered at this convention, and adjourned the meeting.

The evening session began around 8:30 with an auction of manuscripts and artwork donated by the editors. Original cover paintings went for as high as \$8; most manuscripts, some autographed, brought only around 25c. There was so much that auctioneers Mosko-



L. Sprague de Camp signing an autograph.



4SJ Ackerman in his futuristic costume.



Otto Binder, Robert A. W. Lowndes, and Milton A. Rothman.

witz, Taurasi, and John Giunta were unable to dispose of it all before the Hall's 10:00 p.m. closing time, and the rest was set aside for the next day.

On Monday, July 3rd, the program began at 3:00 p.m. with less than half the attendees of the previous day. Moskowitz "read the minutes" by giving a brief survey of the first day's events, then speculated humorously on "The Fan World of the Future." Will Sykora gave a technical talk on "The Science in Science Fiction." The major event of the afternoon was an astronomical film and lecture, "Seeing the Universe," by Dr. Ruoy Sibley, which brought

another ovation, followed by a question-and-answer period. "Science Discussions" were cancelled so a second auction could be held. The remaining manuscripts were put up for bid in bunches of six or eight to move them in a hurry. This went on until the assemblage had to leave for dinner.

The banquet took place at the nearby Hotel Wyndham, which had an ornate banquet room. Though almost everyone came, only thirty-two could afford to order the lamb chop special at the high price of \$1.00. But all listened to the after-dinner speakers. Frank R. Paul, for whom the banquet was held, demurred modestly at the honor and passed over to Willy Ley, who gave what all accounts agreed was a marvelous impromptu address.

Everyone of note said a few words about something. The group then relaxed into several conversational clusters, notably centering around Ley, who discoursed on rocketry and fan fiction, and around Forrest J Ackerman and Ray Bradbury, who were showing a photo album of L.A. fan pictures. The socializing went on until the management shoved everyone out at 1:00 a.m. to close up.

The final day was devoted to a fannish softball game at "Flushing Flats," an athletic field opposite Taurasi's home. Moskowitz engineered it with enthusiasm. Participants were divided into two ten-man teams named the Queens Cometeers and the PSFS Panthers, though in fact members of the two clubs as well as other fans appeared on both teams. There were twenty or so spectators. The game lasted all afternoon and ended with Moskowitz's Cometeers defeating John V. Baltadonis' Panthers by a score of 23 to 11, exhausting themselves so completely in the process they refused the Panthers' challenge to a second game. Those present then adjourned to the World's Fair.

At the same time the Futurians were holding their promised open meeting, which drew about 25 people including several out-of-town fans not interested in softball. Cyril Kornbluth chaired the meeting, which opened with a proposal for a new non-partisan national s-f club, since New Fandom had shown itself to be a closed dictatorship.

The World Convention was reviewed, with

everyone agreeing that, in fairness, it had been a good convention—except for being open only to those whom the triumvirate approved, and for lacking any time for discussions from the floor. Several motions were passed. Of particular importance, Mark Reinsberg of Chicago announced that fans in that city would like to hold a second World Convention the next year. Reinsberg had approached Moskowitz about this during the convention, hoping to get an official endorsement, but Moskowitz had not wanted to get involved in Chicago fan politics and took refuge in Sykora's ruling against conducting any business. The Futurians gladly gave Reinsberg their support.

New Fandom succeeded in its goal of giving science-fiction a good image through the World Convention. Almost all the science-fiction magazines published glowing convention reports, and *Time*, *Writers' Digest*, and *New Yorker* ran generally favorable sketches. On the fannish front, the out-of-town attendees went home and wrote about how the committee had barred its opposition from the open convention in an unfortunately partisan manner.

Both the Queens SFL and the Futurians published lengthy convention reports. The Futurians' were more believable, since the committee's were written in rosy press-release tones. The reports generally agreed as to the basic program schedule. They disagreed over statistics. New Fandom said the attendance had been "approximately 200." The Futurians claimed "The attendance at the convention was determined by direct count. The author [Jack Robins] counted the number of people present at least four DIFFERENT times during the day referred to in the articles." The Futurian statistics were 120 on the first day, of which no more than twenty were women; and only 50-55 returnees on the second day. (However, three years later, Julius Unger published a partial transcript of the sign-in register, omitting illegible signatures, for a total of 152 names.)

There was no challenge of New Fandom's financial report showing income of \$306 and expenditures of \$279.94, though some expenditures such as \$3.00 repayment of carfare spent on convention business were picked at

as "profiteering."

New Fandom felt confident that the Futurians were only screaming into a vacuum, as they had been before the convention, until neutral fanzines began to editorialize against the Exclusion Act. The final straw was publication of a resolution by the Los Angeles SFL chapter condemning the "discriminatory and dictatorial" act. Moskowitz began to issue rebuttals, which the Futurians counterattacked in turn.

The conflict again came to a head at a Philadelphia conference, the second, on October 29, 1939. This time both New Fandom and the Futurians were present *en masse*, as well as a delegation from Chicago led by Reinsberg to win approval for a second World Convention in 1940. The two New York clubs presented their cases in terms that led to filibustering and name-calling. At one point Sykora had to be restrained from attacking Wollheim. This climax did nothing to enhance either group's image.

Who "won" the day depends upon which faction's fanzines one reads. Both retreated to stating their claims through the mails. Moskowitz's view of the Exclusion Act was that the convention had been open to all, and that the six had been excluded only because they had refused to promise to avoid causing trouble, with the deliberate goal of making martyrs of themselves.

Wollheim retorted that the committee had never allowed them to make any promises at all, and that in fact they had been placed on a blacklist not to be admitted under any circumstances. The blacklist had been drawn up at a committee meeting a whole month before the convention. He cited as his source Julius Unger, who had been at the meeting where Will Sykora had rammed through the ruling over Moskowitz's protests.

Outside fans backed off until they could determine who was telling the truth. The conflict sputtered on over the years, giving New York fandom an indelibly bad name as World Convention organizers. What immediately counted was that the Philadelphia conference had given its official approval to the Chicago group to hold a second World Science Fiction Convention.

Chicon Chicago-1940

Chicago's desire to also host a World Convention began in early 1939, when New York fanzines brought the concept to its attention. Fans in Chicago had been peaceful, but two different teenagers each decided he wanted to be Chair-man of the Convention. Each assembled a committee.

William Lawrence Hamling reformed the defunct Chicago chapter of the SFL to give himself support. Mark Reinsberg and Erle Korshak got the idea of enlisting the support of Wilson (Bob) Tucker, of Bloomington, Ill., who was one of the most popular fans in the country. Together they created the Illini Fantasy Fictioneers. Both groups lobbied for

backers. Reinsberg went to New York, and was disappointed when the first World Convention would not name him as its successor.

On October 8, 1939, Reinsberg went to a meeting of the Chicago SFL. He argued that fandom was so sick of the feuding that had spoiled the New York convention that Chicago would never be trusted with one unless

they could settle their differences. He offered a united convention committee with posts for all. Hamling agreed to accept, and to operate under Reinsberg's IFF banner. The new committee immediately publicized the end of the feud, and announced a decision to select the Labor Day 1940 weekend and to invite E. E. Smith, Ph.D. as guest-of-honor, as evidence of real progress.

Reinsberg, Korshak, and Richard I. Meyer then hitchhiked to Bloomington, where they joined the Tuckers in driving to the Philadelphia conference to make a presentation. They were almost ignored in the acrimony over the New Fandom/Futurian conflict. Just as Chairman John V. Baltadonis was about to adjourn the conference, Reinsberg got the floor to state his bid. Sam Moskowitz promised New Fandom's full support. Since Reinsberg already had the Futurians' pledge, this made it unanimous. The conference voted its approval, and the Illini Fantasy Fictioneers went home with what they could claim was the united support of fandom.

During the following year, all fanzines spread the IFF's press releases about the upcoming convention. New York had had no members other than those who showed up as attendees, but the IFF encouraged all who supported the second convention to join the IFF immediately as corresponding members, since their membership fees were needed to help pay expenses. Many fans did, not just once but under various pseudonyms—the roster shows such names as Hoy Ping Pong (Bob Tucker) and Samson Delilah Gottesman (Cyril Kornbluth).

In its numerous fanzine exposes of the first convention, the Futurians had childishly refused to dignify it as the World Science Fiction Convention, claiming that by the Exclusion Act it had forfeited its right to the title. Instead they called it variously the Fifth Eastern Convention, the World's Fair Convention, and the New Fandom Convention. All these were ignored by fandom, but a non-partisan nickname had a much greater effect.

Forrest J Ackerman was notorious as fandom's most fanatic devotee of reformed spelling, and for giving everyone and everything futuristic nicknames. (He and Myrtle Douglas had attended the convention as 4SJ and Morojo.) Ackerman, who published the LASFL's



Charles D. Hornig, Erle Korshak, Gertrude Kuslan, Mark Reinsberg, and Robert A. Madle. Obscured behind Hornig: Forrest J Ackerman and Jack Speer.

Voice of the Imagination, dubbed the New York and forthcoming Chicago conventions the "Nycon" and the "Chicon." They were handy abbreviations and fans took to them. The IFF liked "Chicon" so much that it adopted it as its official nickname and used it regularly in its press releases.

The Chicon took place officially on September 1st and 2nd, 1940. Unofficially, fans arrived early and stayed late. Several hitchhiked in; Olon Wiggins and Lew Martin of Denver came via railroad boxcars. An auto from New York crammed with Futurians overturned, but no one was seriously injured. The IFF and CSFL posted groups at the bus and train terminals to greet arriving fans.

The Chicon ended up smaller than the Nycon—the sign-in register contained 128 names, not counting gag pseudonyms—but was much more closely knit. The night before the convention, Myrtle Douglas threw her hotel room open for socializing, which drew as many as fifty fans at one time.

The Chicon opened on Sunday, September 1st on the second floor of the Hotel Chicagoan, with an informal get-together session.

Again many attendees had brought special souvenir issues of their fanzines for sale. At 1:30 p.m. the formal program began. Bob Tucker gave a welcoming address, and Richard Meyer read a report of the Program Committee. Chairman Mark Reinsberg was supposed to follow with a speech, "One Year of Fan Progress," but he was so keyed up he almost fainted halfway through. Erle Korshak hurriedly gave a summary of some resolutions presented to the Chicon for consideration by the membership.



Unidentified, Julius Unger, Forrest J Ackerman, and Raymond A. Palmer, in front of the Chicagoan.

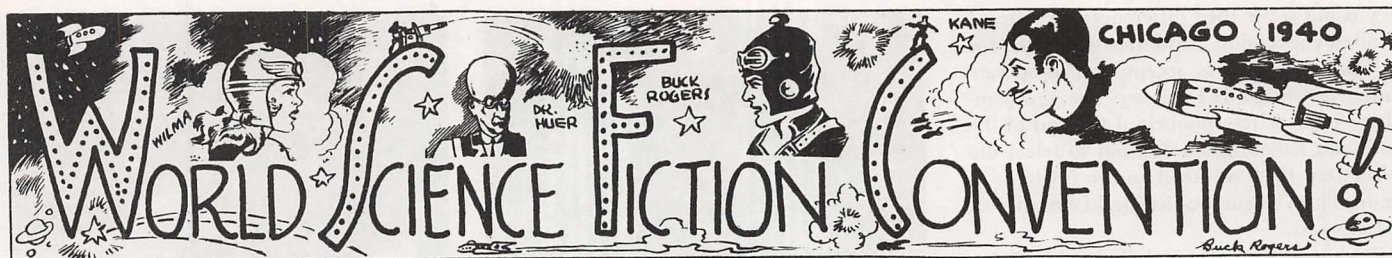
It was expected that E. E. Smith's guest-of-honor speech would be platitudes about s-f. Instead he electrified and delighted the fans by talking about "What This Convention Means." He began by noting that, unlike attendees of professional conventions who have their way paid by their employers, the fans had all come at their own expense. He elaborated to describe fandom as a close-knit, intelligent fellowship whose small numbers proved that they had an imagination and mental scope beyond that of the general public. This drew a tremendous ovation and had a major impact upon fandom, promoting such catchphrases as "Fans are Slans!" and encouraging fans around the country to move together into communal apartments during the next few years.

The authors and editors in the audience were invited to speak briefly. Raymond Palmer's talk about "What Science Fiction Really Is" turned out to be a description of an editor's professional problems. By this time Reinsberg had recovered and finished his talk. Then Bob Tucker gave the "premiere" showing of "Monsters of the Moon," an s-f farce he had cobbled together from unlikely film scraps. An open meeting of the Indiana Fantasy Association followed, with its Chairman Ted Ditky giving a history of the club.

A two-hour break was allowed to set up for the masquerade party. Ackerman and Morojo had started something the previous year, and this time everyone got into the act. Even E. E. Smith came in a space mercenary costume as Northwest Smith. The judges awarded the first prize to David Kyle as Ming the Merciless; second prize to Robert Lowndes as the Bar Sinestro from Hall and Flint's *The Blind Spot*; and third prize to Ackerman and Morojo, who wore their previous outfits and put on a skit about the future. Several other costumeders did impromptu skits. Art Widner brought down the



Ted Dikty, Olon F. Wiggins, Forrest J Ackerman, Lew Martin, and Fred B. Schroyer.



Chicon Program Book heading by Dick Calkins, featuring his Buck Rogers comic-strip characters, courtesy of the John F. Dille Co.—a Chicago-based newspaper syndicate.

house by grabbing a bottle from the bar, stuffing a pillow under his shirt, putting on Mary Gray's costume hat, and posing as Jack Williamson's popular drunken Giles Habibula.

The good spirits overflowed the hotel; Reinsberg, as Buck Rogers, climbed a garbage can on the sidewalk outside to zap pedestrians with a water pistol. Almost everyone had either a water or suction dart pistol, and these were freely used.

Erle Korshak finally quieted everyone down to hold an auction. *Amazing Stories* had moved to Chicago shortly before the convention, and editor Ray Palmer donated a massive stack of artwork for auction and free copies of the magazine as giveaways to the attendees. There was some material from the New York magazines as well. A Virgil Finlay cover painting went for slightly over \$5; other items brought correspondingly less.

Monday, September 2nd opened with a closed meeting of the Illini Fantasy Fictioneers. Since its goal of hosting a World Convention had been fulfilled, it reorganized as a local club only. A business meeting followed, with two resolutions presented for votes. The excessive number of fanzines was to be cut off by a rule prohibiting publication of any new titles. Hot debate led to an amendment that would ban fan editors instead. The motion died. But the second resolution passed, and Forry Ackerman was delegated to write in the convention's name to the Motion Picture Pro-

ducers & Distributors of America, Inc. to congratulate the film industry for such excellent fantasies as *Dr. Cyclops* and *The Thief of Bagdad*, and to urge the production of more such "scientifilms" during the coming year.

By this time it had been agreed throughout fandom that the World Science Fiction Convention should become an annual event. The next item of business was the selection of a site for 1941. Cleveland, Chicago, and Denver were volunteered. The Futurians offered to host it in New York, but they were virtually ignored. Los Angeles and Philadelphia were suggested, but attendees from those cities declined. After considerable debate, Olon Wiggins' bid for Denver was accepted—as was Donald Wollheim's suggestion that "Denvention" sounded better than "Dencon."

The evening's program was the banquet in honor of E. E. Smith. The committee had gotten its free meeting facilities at the Chicagoan for a promise to hold a banquet and sell at least fifty tickets at \$1.00 each; they met this minimum and sold twelve more. The dinner was followed by some minor speeches. Erle Korshak reintroduced everyone to everyone else. And the Chicon officially ended, though socializing lasted another day. A Nycon-style softball game had been scheduled for the next day but was cancelled when no one showed any interest in it. Instead a dozen fans visited the Field Museum of Natural History.

The Chicon was a notable contrast to the

Nycon in many ways, especially in its camaraderie. Most of the Nycon's attendees had been local residents, who did not attend more than the first day. Most of the Chicon's were out-of-towners who attended everything. The Chicon showed no concern for the dignified front that New Fandom felt science-fiction must present.

A group from the Decker, Ind. Literature, Science and Hobbies Club had brought its mascot, a medical skeleton named Oscar, which was propped up behind the speaker's stand with a copy of *Amazing* in its hand, and was given a seat at the banquet. During the masquerade a delegation in costume marched to two newspaper offices to urge press coverage of the convention. (They got it.) A policeman threatened to run Jack Speer in for appearing in public in golden shorts and helmet with a ray gun.

The committee's financial report included an item of "bribe to C. Kornbluth, 1c," which had been to keep Kornbluth from giving Tucker a hotfoot. The committee did not hesitate to lower itself to peddling soft drinks and sandwiches to the conventioners to help make expenses. The Chicon ended up with a profit of \$70.97, which the committee claimed the right to divide among itself in repayment for all the work it had put into the convention. No one objected.

The Chicon ended up with a unanimously favorable fan press.

Denvention Denver-1941

Two months later, though, the November issue of *Sun Spots* published an unsigned notice: "Are you from the east? If you are, I doubt if you will ever get together enough money to travel to the Denvention, so for that reason we eastern fans are planning to have our own convention in Newark, N.J. It will be entirely independent of the Denvention, as far as the date goes."

It was unclear whether what was being proposed was an additional World Convention or a regional convention. Fans did not wait to find out. Denunciations instantly poured in

from all over, accusing Newark fandom of trying to wreck the Denvention by drawing support away from it. Several fans assumed that Sam Moskowitz was behind it and bitterly attacked him, but backed down when it turned out that James Taurasi had published the notice without Moskowitz's knowledge. Most did not believe the "Newarkon" was a deliberate attempt to scuttle the Denver Worldcon, but thought it would have been the result anyway because fandom was not strong enough to support two Worldcon-sized conventions in one year. Several fan clubs passed resolutions in support of Denver alone.

The affair blew over in just one month. Faced with unanimous disapproval, Newark fandom dropped any plans for the convention. By December, T. Bruce Yerke could apologize in his *The Damn Thing* for having blamed Moskowitz, but note approvingly that the result of the affair had been to settle once and for all that fandom would resolutely anathematize "any person who EVER AGAIN tries to start a rebel convention" in opposition to the World Science Fiction Convention. Regional conventions did win approval in later years, but the tradition that the World Convention would be held only once a year was

firmly established.

The Denvention, which billed itself as the "3rd World Science-Fiction Convention," was set up on lines similar to the Chicon. Fans were urged to join the organizing club, the Colorado Fantasy Society. The CFS started a new fanzine, the *CFS Review*, which was a forerunner of the present progress reports. It also published a combination fanzine, *The Denventioneer*, which consisted of small special issues of other popular fanzines printed and sent to the CFS to be stapled together under one cover and sold to raise money.

The March 1941 *CFS Review* announced that editor F. Orlin Tremaine of *Comet Stories* would present a \$25 cash award to the fan who overcame the greatest obstacles in attending the Denvention. The May issue announced the dates of July 4th, 5th, and 6th; the location of the Colorado and Centennial Rooms in the fashionable Shirley-Savoy Hotel, just two blocks from the Colorado state capitol; and the guest-of-honor: Robert A. Heinlein.

The Denvention was like the Chicon, only much smaller. Fans arrived early, and by Wednesday, the 2nd, they were already settling into the hotel. The Heinleins' room became a social center. Again fans drove and hitchhiked from all over the country. The Los Angeles delegation was particularly notable; it was led by Walter J. Daugherty and his wife on their honeymoon. Daugherty had also brought recording equipment, and spent the entire convention preserving as much of it as he could on acetate discs.

The program also copied the Chicon's. It was to open Friday morning, July 4th, with the informal social session and presentation of resolution petitions. Nobody brought any petitions. Daugherty set up his sound equipment by a piano and spent the morning grabbing people to talk into the microphone. Milton Rothman and Walt Liebscher cut an impromptu boogie-woogie duet. At noon the committee herded everyone into the foyer to sign in. 68 signatures were collected, though everyone agreed later that actual attendance had been at least ten or fifteen higher.

The formal session began at 1:00 with chairman Olon Wiggins and assistants Lew Martin and Roy Hunt welcoming the guests. All three stuttered over their speeches, until Wiggins asked in a painful silence if someone with more public speaking experience would like to take over as moderator. Daugherty promptly leaped up and was given the honor.

Forry Ackerman introduced guest-of-honor Robert A. Heinlein, whose speech, "The Discovery of the Future," was received with a sort of awe. Alluding to the World War, Heinlein said that the world was in trouble and that there would be dramatic changes ahead. Science-fiction, in his opinion, would condition the mind to accept the rapid evolution of society. Fans had the greatest potential to remain sane in the upheavals to come. After sustained applause, Heinlein spent the rest of the afternoon answering questions that had been submitted in advance in writing.

The first evening began at 8:00 p.m. with

America's Favorites!

•
**THRILLING
WONDER
STORIES**

•
**STARTLING
STORIES**

•
**CAPTAIN
FUTURE**



Best Stories—Best Authors—Best Illustrations

Standard Magazines' editor Mort Weisinger arose from fandom and was an enthusiastic supporter of the early Worldcons, helping them out with free publicity in his three magazines and commissioning advertising for their Program Books by such top artists of the day as Hans W. Wessolowski and Virgil Finlay.

the masquerade party. Fans this year had brought cameras to record the event; some fanzine Denvention reports carried photographs of costumes. Walt Daugherty let it be known that his "Galactic Roamer" outfit contained \$500 worth of material. He was given a \$3.00 second prize. First prize went to E. E. Evans as a "Bug-Eyed Monster from Rhea," and Ackerman got third prize for a "Hunchback of Notre Dame" mask that L.A. fan Ray

Harryhausen had made for him. Leslyn Heinlein wore a semi-oriental dress as Queen Niphar from Cabell's *Figures of Earth*, but Heinlein told people to just consider himself as Adam Stink, the world's most life-like robot; a gambit that would be copied by many non-costumed attendees of masquerades in the future.

The masquerade was followed by a screening of the silent *The Lost World*, which fans

had more fun kibitzing and making hand-shadows over than watching.

Saturday, July 5th, was supposed to begin at 9:00 a.m. with a business meeting of the CFS. Milton Rothman came down for it, waited a while for someone else to show up, and spent the morning practicing the piano.

Other conventioners managed to get up in time for the afternoon business session, but when Daugherty had not arrived by 1:00 p.m., Kornbluth picked up the gavel and began clowning around. The audience was asked to select a winner of *Comet's* contest for the person overcoming the greatest difficulties getting to the Denvention. Rothman was chosen because he'd had to sit next to Robert Madle all the way from Philadelphia. The 1942 World Convention was presented to Picadilly Bomb Shelter No. 3 in London.

At that point Daugherty came in and took over the gavel. The Denvention went on record as approving the British Science Fiction Relief Society, a creation of Texas fan John Cunningham to send s-f magazines to British fans deprived of U.S. pulps by the war. Art Widner moved that any city bidding for the World Convention should have at least one person of legal age on its committee. This failed to pass. Ackerman, who was scheduled to give a speech, spent ten minutes explaining that he had no intention of doing so. He did, though, ask fans to send their fanzines to the Library of Amateur Journalism at the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia, one of the earliest serious repositories of fan publications.

After some minor announcements, Walt Daugherty spoke on the desirability of organizing fandom into one club. By that time the Science Fiction League was moribund, and New Fandom had never been a national group despite its pretensions. Daugherty suggested the Fantasy Amateur Press Association or the new National Fantasy Fan Federation as possibilities. To show what standards a national organization should encourage, he then presented five awards he had prepared. These were military-style brass medals on dark blue ribbons, with blank reverses on which Daugherty had engraved a suitable caption. The awards went to Ackerman, for services rendered to fandom in general; to damon knight, for contributions to fan humor; to Julius Unger, as publisher of fandom's finest newzine; to Roy Hunt, for the best fan art; and to Wiggins, for the best general fanzine. The recipients stepped forward and had their medals pinned on them.

After a dinner break the usual auction was held. Many attendees were frozen out when prices went as high as \$20 for covers and \$10 for interior artwork. Some fans donated their costumes to the auction. Robert Heinlein bought Korshak's skull headpiece, decided he didn't want it, and reauctoned it himself to Julius Schwartz amid general laughter.

Sunday, July 6th, began with the final attempt to hold a softball game at a World Convention. It was abandoned with a 7-7 tie after four innings, and the players returned to the Shirley-Savoy for the afternoon program.

The schedule called for the reading of more resolutions, so Rothman proposed that the convention declare that Yngvi was *not* a louse. This was rejected as heretical, and damon knight's following motion that Rothman was also a louse was rousinglly passed. knight [he didn't give up spelling his name with small letters until the 50's] then proposed that fan clubs be encouraged to design personal banners to be hung at conventions attended by their members. The idea was generally approved.

The following item was serious enough to be declared off the record, but all the fanzine publishers present mentioned it in their trip reports anyway. *Comet Stories*, which had promised the \$25 prize, was in financial trouble, and editor Tremaine hadn't come to the Denvention even though he was scheduled on the program. The committee wondered what to do about the contest. Heinlein enhanced his reputation by personally guaranteeing the \$25, and a committee of Lowndes, Wiggins, knight, and Ackerman was appointed to select the winner.

The selection of the next year's site revealed that several cities had been actively planning for the honor. Joe Fortier gave an enthusiastic promotion for San Francisco, brandishing a personal welcome to fandom from the mayor. Rothman's pitch for Washington, D.C. was more of a defensive statement that, the cost of living there aside, its national importance made it the best site. Robert Madle simply entered Philadelphia's name. Walt Daugherty said that he was bidding for Los Angeles. His following speech was unnecessary; Daugherty had done such a popular job of extemporaneously chairing the Denvention that nobody could doubt that a Los Angeles World Convention would be superbly handled. It was Los Angeles by an overwhelming majority.

The banquet that night in Heinlein's honor was a pleasant climax to the convention. About 40 fans attended. The winner of the *Comet* prize was announced; it was Allen Class, an unknown young Ohio fan who had hitchhiked to Denver, appeared without warning on Wiggins' doorstep a month early, and had had to find two odd jobs to support himself until convention time.

The gathering then relaxed. Heinlein told jokes, and Daugherty gave an impersonation of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Several others stood up to give comedy speeches. Earlier that afternoon, the committee had received a telegram supposedly from Martian agents, stating that they had been secretly observing Earthmen for some time and congratulating the Denvention for its interplanetary outlook.

An Indiana fan named Claude Degler now bewailed the fact that the attendees had dismissed the telegram as a joke without considering whether it might be genuine. He suggested that the convention pause to take it seriously. The attendees laughed and went on to the next gag speech.

It was not until some months later that Degler's subsequent actions showed that he had been entirely serious, and that the notion

that fans were more mentally stable than normal mortals was only a myth.

The banquet closed with Franklin Brady presenting Heinlein with seven books which the fans had passed a hat to buy him as a birthday present. (Mrs. Heinlein selected the titles.) Brady took them back temporarily so that everyone could autograph the endpapers. All present sang "Auld Lang Syne," and the Denvention ended.

The Denvention had been another popular success, but some fanzines were mildly alarmed over the trend it showed. The attendance of the World Science Fiction Convention had steadily shrunk in both fans and professionals—only four authors, including Heinlein, had been at the Denvention. Some thought the convention was taking an unfortunately juvenile turn, with all its gag motions, a fake hypnotism "victim" that had alarmed part of the hotel's staff, fans locking others in their rooms, and a lie-in in the lobby to protest the early closing of the bar. But it was generally assumed that 1942's convention would reverse that trend, since Los Angeles was a large city and Daugherty could be trusted to run a solid convention.

The Pacificon (Ackerman's title) started out well enough. Rather than asking fans to join the sponsoring club, the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society, Daugherty created the Pacificon Society, a separate group whose sole goal was the convention. Bi-weekly Pacificon meetings were held to schedule the program.

These plans came to an abrupt halt on December 7, 1941, when Pearl Harbor was bombed and blackouts were immediately instituted in Los Angeles in expectation of Japanese bombardment. Los Angeles was suddenly not a spot for a fannish convention.

On January 11, 1942, the committee sent out an open letter asking fandom to vote on whether it should try to hold the Worldcon as scheduled, turn it over to an inland city, or postpone it for the duration of the war. But the war itself made the vote unnecessary. It quickly became obvious that since most fans were young men of draft age, there would be few left free by summer to attend a s-f convention; and that in any case wartime restrictions against unnecessary travel would make it impossible for most out-of-town fans to reach any site.

The Pacificon was regretfully postponed for the duration. □

(To be continued in Progress Report No. 3)

Thanks for help on this first installment of the Worldcon history go to several people, especially to Forrest J Ackerman and Bruce Pelz, who opened up their large fanzine collections for research (and to Ackerman for the photos); to Donald Wollheim and Bob Tucker for their long letters that answered several questions; and to Harry Warner, Jr., who sent a list of all the fanzines he used for the Worldcon chapters in his *All Our Yesterdays* and his forthcoming history of fandom in the 1950s, which saved many hours of aimless searching for the convention reports.

In 1936, three years before the first WorldCon,

Philadelphia

put on the first PhilCon, thus inventing the SF Convention. We've been putting on these regional SF Cons ever since.

In

1977,

Philadelphia

would like to mark the 41st anniversary of that very first SF Con with what we will call

PhilCon 3.

We plan this WorldCon to be rather like our annual PhilCons, only bigger; but it will still be easy-going, relaxed, and emphasize Science Fiction. Of necessity, we will limit attendance to what can comfortably fit the meeting rooms of our hotel, the Sheraton in Center City Philadelphia -- about 2,750.

PhilCon 3

will be put on by Sobwick, Scithers, McCunney, McDaniel, and the rest of the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society -- if we also have your support. May we ask for your help?



WE'RE STILL HERE





7 FOR '77 ORLANDO

VOTE ORLANDO FOR THE 1977 WORLDCON

AN EXPERIENCED COMMITTEE

We have worked on a multitude of conventions, including Noreascon, Torcon, Baycon, Boskone, Lunacon, Midwescon, Pulpcon, and Akon.

WITH THE DIVERSE INTERESTS OF FANDOM ITSELF

Con fans and fanzine fans, club fans, movie fans, Art Show and auction fans, costume fans, Anachronists and Georgette Heyer fans, hucksters, filksingers, even program fans! And, of course, party fans. No matter what your special interests, we have someone who wants it to go well.

DON LUNDY, Chairman
SUFORD LEWIS
ELI COHEN
RUSTY HEVELIN
BRUCE NEWROCK
ELLIOT SHORTER
JOANN WOOD

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VOTE ORLANDO IN '77

THE COMMITTEE

DONALD LUNDURY, Chairman -- Don has been a reader/collector since 1950, but was only drawn into active fandom in the 60's. In 1970 he organized the Heicon flight; doubtless his notoriously weak memory is responsible for his current involvement in the Aussiecon flight. He has worked on numerous cons and chaired the 1972 Lunacon with Ted Sturgeon as Guest of Honor. His other hobbies include restoring player pianos and raising redheads.

SUSAN LEWIS -- Suford has been reading and collecting SF since the tender age of nine. By 1961 she had joined LASFS and attended her first con. Midway through college she joined MITSFS and was soon contributing to Twilight Zine, Stroon, and TAPA. In '67 she was a founding member of NESFA, which she served as Clerk, Vice President, and President. Suford was on the Noreascon Committee and in 1973 was chairman of Boskone X. She is also a costume fan, a founding patroness of Georgette Heyer fandom and a contributor to APA:NESFA.

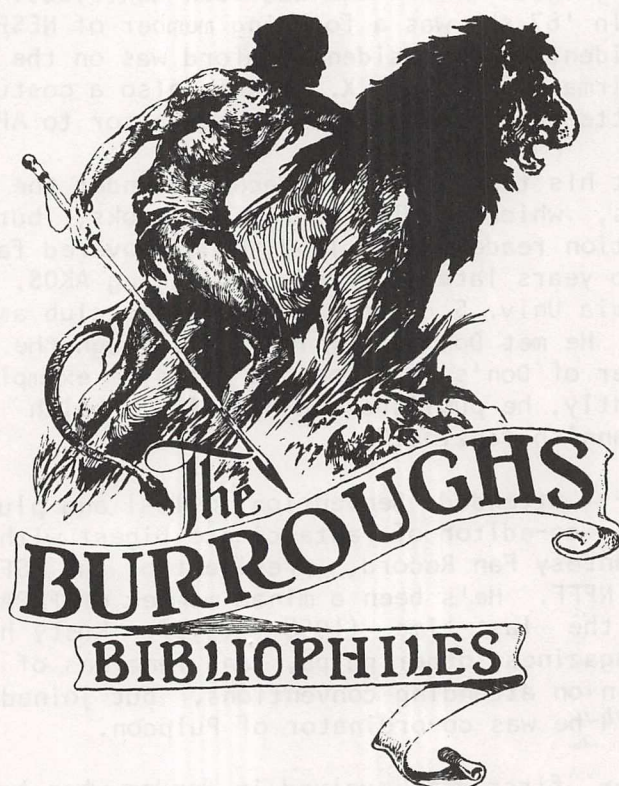
ELI COHEN -- Cut his teeth on The Spaceship Under the Apple Tree and The Magic Ball From Mars, which did little for the books, but turned Eli into a fanatic Science Fiction reader. In 1967, he discovered fandom in the form of Nycon III, and two years later started publishing AKOS. He was a founding member of the Columbia Univ. SF group, running the club as its Grand Marshall from 1969 to 1973. He met Don Lundury in 1970 through the Heicon flight, and wound up as treasurer of Don's Lunacon; a definite example of the hazards of air travel. Currently, he publishes KRATOPHANY, which LOCUS # 163 called "Canada's leading fannish fanzine."

RUSTY HEVELIN -- attended Denvention in 1941 and plunged right into the wide world of fanac: co-editor of Fantascience Digest with Bob Madle, editor of NEBULA - The Fantasy Fan Record, president of the PSFS, traveling giant and director of the NFFF. He's been a minac member of FAPA three times, cliff hanging 12 years the last time (1958 - 1970). Rusty has one of the major collections of SF magazines, other pulps, and fanzines of the 1940's. Since 1965 he has zeroed in on attending conventions, but joined SAPS last October. In both 1973 and 1974 he was co-ordinator of Pulpcon.

BRUCE NEWROCK -- first got involved in fandom when he helped found an SF club at CCNY in 1961: he served as Treasurer and Student Council representative for it. In 1967, he attended Nycon III, and has been a confirmed fan ever since. Bruce was co-founder of BRUNSFPA, first King of the Eastern Kingdom, worked on the 1972 Lunacon and many cons since. Aside from fanac, he also enjoys model railroading and photography.

ELLIOT SHORTER -- is one of fandom's natural wonders and resources. He's always there to help out at every con with whatever needs doing. Even a partial list of his activities is overwhelming: TAFF delegate to Heicon, Vice-President of ESFA, Seneschal of the Eastern Kingdom, perennial worldcon trouble shooter, masquerade judge, Westercon art auctioneer, huckster, filksinger ... the list is endless. Why, there was even one Boskone when he was Isaac Asimov!

JOANNE WOOD -- first joined fandom with the Cincinnati Fantasy Group, and helped put on the 1966 Midwescon. In her travels she has joined the Little Men and NESFA, helped to found PENSFA, worked on the Baycon. Joanne wrote her Master's thesis on Science Fiction Fandom as a Social Movement, and is now completing her Doctorate. She can usually be found at the Advent table in the hucksters room with her husband, Advent partner Ed Wood.



"I still live,"—Edgar Rice Burroughs.

The Burroughs Bibliophiles will hold their 1976 Annual Dum-Dum in the Muehlebach Hotel in conjunction with the 34th World Science Fiction Convention, the MidAmeriCon. We will have our usual Saturday Luncheon Meeting about 1:00 PM. Our Guests-of-Honor will be announced at a later date, but since the MidAmeriCon is being held in Kansas City, the national headquarters of the Burroughs Bibliophiles, you can be sure that we are going all out to make this one of the very best Dum-Dums ever.

The Burroughs Bibliophiles will also have a

meeting room where members can meet and greet each other and hold special activities throughout the MidAmeriCon. Chairman Ken Keller has guaranteed us the room so we are sure we will have it this time.

The MidAmeriCon is still almost two years away. . .but our 1975 Dum-Dum will be held on Burroughs Day, September 1, 1975, at the North American Science Fiction Convention in Los Angeles' Marriott Hotel. Guest-of-Honor will be Edgar Rice Burroughs! With scads of celebs attending to honor ERB's 100th Anniversary.

The CONcatenation Follies

LETTERS FROM THE MEMBERS

(Most of the letters printed here are in response to Bill Fesselmeyer's "Whichness of the Why," a publication examining several possible alternatives for limiting the crushing mobs of people likely to show up at MidAmeriCon. The viable options were: (1) Setting an absolute maximum; (2) Selling no at-the-door memberships; (3) A very high at-the-door rate combined with a rapidly escalating membership fee; (4) Eliminating programming appealing to those only marginally interested in the rest of the convention, or (5) No limiting at all—doing nothing. Ken Keller's editorial details many of our decisions. If you have this PR, you already have your membership, of course, so you may not care overly much. However, to guarantee the maximum fairness, we would appreciate your spreading the word. If you publish a fanzine, mention the high points; if you belong to a club, make an announcement to the membership; if you're the only fan in Muleshoe, Texas, there isn't a lot you can do. All editorial comments in the letters are in this bold-face type and are by me, Tom Reamy.)

JOHN MILLARD
86 Broadway Ave., Apt. 18
Toronto, Ont., Canada, M4P 1T4

This topic has been on my mind for many a day since DISCON and I still don't have a good answer. I don't think there are any experts we can turn to who would be able to give us the answer. On the contrary, most of these experts on conventions would be delighted with our problems of increasing attendance. Their criterion is quantity, not quality.

I agree the increase in attendance, in the past few years, can be attributed to 1.) Star Trek, 2.) Comics Collectors, and 3.) The Hangers-On, in that order. A number of Star Trek and Comic Collectors have discovered Science Fiction, which is a gain for us, but the bulk have no interest whatever—except for their own narrow field. The Hangers-On are parasites which we can do without. In the long run they could probably ruin our excellent reputation built up over the years.

I have read over the alternatives a number of times and have come to the conclusion that they are just variations of each other. The crux of the matter is this: "Are the W.S.F. Conventions to remain the same as before—that is—open to anybody and everybody is welcome, or are they to become closed conventions and only those with an interest in Science Fiction and its processes will be welcome to attend?" This is a decision that has to be made and the MidAmeriCon committee will have to make it for MidAmeriCon. We, unfortunately, do not have a reliable forum that can make this decision. So it will have to be played by ear.

If you decide on a closed convention it means additional work and expense. You will need to police things more closely and this requires security forces. Security forces of the uniformed type will need close supervision by 3 or 4 committee members, not all at the same time, but spread over time, to avoid unpleasantness and Gestapo tactics.

Convention badges will be required for entry into all activities. This is the way Professional Conventions

operate—no one is admitted without their badges.

Other suggestions to limit attendance. You *cannot* restrict attendance by saying there will be no at-the-door admission; this would cause a lot of problems and entail a lot of extra work that the committee doesn't need.

Publicity and advertising: Curtail it to the barest possible minimum and this includes promotions by outside interests like Science Fiction book shops, SFWA, SFRA, etc. They have a vested interest in larger and larger attendance, as do most of the Hucker types.

In Progress Reports: be very pointed about the structure of the convention. No Star Trek, No Comics, etc., RE: Program, movies, etc. Get the message across that this is a Science Fiction Convention and not a three ring circus. It's quality not quantity that we want.

These are some of the things I have been thinking about. There are probably a number of pitfalls I have missed, but it could be a start. It will, no doubt, take time to re-organize things or perhaps it will never happen as it will be difficult to get most of us to agree on the rights and wrongs. So I think it's up to the committee of each convention to decide what kind of a convention they want to have—regardless of the W.S.F. Soc. Rules and Regulations, they don't mean a damn thing, they are just a bunch of words on paper and there's no way they can be enforced.

I know a number of people would not be happy about the idea of a closed convention, but that is their personal decision. They have to make it, no one else can make it for them.

(Of course, the route we're taking is not a closed convention, it's just not a wide-open one. No one is excluded; we're simply DIScouraging rather than ENCouraging.)

JACK CHALKER
Box 7687
Baltimore, MD 21207

As was to be expected, I have some opinions on the proposals in "Whichness of the Why" which, I think, are very well stated.

First off, I am skeptical that a huge at-the-door fee will discourage mainstream walk-ins like the 1500 we got at DC, even if the at-the-door fee was \$50.00 (which I think is the most psychologically reasonable minimum if the purpose is to cut them down), mainly because they won't know that \$50.00 is an idiotic price, or that it's abnormal. Many of the walk-ins, 60-80%, are professional people. Checked what a professional 1-day conference charges? \$65+. To such people \$50 is cheap for 5 days.

(I would argue with you about the percentage of professional walk-ins, though I have nothing to base it on except general observation. It seems to me they're mostly kids, from small ones with parents in tow to college-types.)

Also, you are going to have 2 different problems that you must face up to: (1) you will have a very large problem with "crashers" and so badge security will have to be universal, 24-hours, and tight. (2) You will have to allow for the accumulation of large cash surpluses, since even if it cut the walk-ins to 200 this represents \$10,000 not budgetable in any way! Oh, yeah—you'll also have to face the stolen badge bit more often and a number of people will report lost badges that aren't.

Despite all this, the huge at-the-door rate is the most viable suggestion made, and the one with the largest potential for success if your organization can keep the con security-tight. It's worth a try. However, remember that you'll have to keep registration open longer, or legit people won't be able to get their bad-



Aussiecon
33rd World
Science Fiction Convention
Melbourne, Aug 14th-17th 1975

Professional Guest-of-Honour: Ursula K. LeGuin
Australian Guest-of-Honour: Donald H. Tuck
Fan Guests-of-Honor: Susan Wood & Michael Glicksohn
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Chairman: Robin Johnson
Vice-Chairmen: Leigh Edmonds & Bruce Gillespie

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ges and get in if they come at odd hours. And anything less than \$50 won't have a prayer.

On programming my feeling (impression, really) has been that there is a sameness and something of a dullness to worldcon programming, ours included. Bright, original programming ideas and innovations are desperately needed, and if I knew what they were I'd go there myself. However, we should face a few facts that certain groups of limited interest need not be there.

(The dearth of innovative programming is because fandom is second only to the D.A.R. for clinging to outmoded tradition.)

Do not show, advertise, mention, or otherwise intimate any Star Trek or Roddenberry material. It is our experience that ST fans who are also fan fans will come and enjoy a non-ST con; the rest you want to eliminate.

Although I am a comics collector and have made my best trades and buys at worldcons, I would urge that no comic programming or exhibitions by people well-known in the comic field be used, and, further, that comics and Star Trek items, along with similar non-hard-core items, be barred from huckster room and artshow.

One item not mentioned is films. All-night films were initiated when worldcons grew so large that open parties faded, and some place had to be found to put the surplus people. They are popular, yes.

We found that at both Torcon and Discon about 5-10% of the people came primarily for the films, while a few more percentages came with the films as an incentive. We are, in other words, catering at this point to film fandom. Eliminate the films and you eliminate these people.

You also, of course, drastically increase your crowd control problems. They are still an effective limiter. If we had not scheduled major DAY films opposite programming we would have had more problems than we could manage.

(That is the reason we've decided to not eliminate films altogether. We will have an afternoon program and an evening program and close the whole thing down around one a.m. The film room will then be

locked and guarded. Too many people seem to come to conventions to steal films rather than watch them. Too, anyone planning to sleep in the film room will have to come up with another plan. We will be scheduling crowd-pleasing films opposite crowd-pleasing programming in an additional effort to keep the mobs spread. I know it will make some people unhappy (remember Dumbo?), but at least they've had advance warning.)

Your auctions will almost always cover your inflation and unanticipated expenses, but since you are not running your own artshow you have created your own problems there. Art shows generally gross around \$27,000.

(Yes, but what do they NET? We feel we've solved a problem rather than created one. We'll trade the money for the lack of an additional headache any day. From what I've heard filtering down from Discon, the same feeling was there too—after it was too late. Besides, this will be the last Trimble-run artshow outside of California and they're planning an extravaganza farewell performance.)

A no-limit convention would work only if a governing board of directors of a supervisory nature were to be set up to handle all finances. They would set fees and make negotiations on who, what, where. This, a professional structure of set-ups and fees geared to them is the best policy, but the bad taste of WSFS Inc. is still in the old fan's mouths and this excellent solution is not possible yet, I think. It's coming, though.

(I doubt it; fans are too cantankerous and individualistic to bow to outside authority—or even inside authority. Any attempt could only be a WSFS Inc. rerun. I'm looking forward to the Worldcon History reaching the WSFS Inc. It should be very interesting. Besides, why do you need professionals to handle the money? You need professionals to handle the physical logistics of a mammoth convention. Some fans have gotten so paranoid about a committee pocketing a dime, they've lost sight of what the conventions are for.)

The cheapest I've seen a municipal auditorium or civic center in a major city rent for is \$5,000 a night. To use it effectively (and it would be a fine bet) you would have to charge \$25 per from the start.

Sad, but impractical. If you could get it for about half that, though, it would be worth using for major functions.

(This should surprise you; it did us. The Kansas City Municipal Auditorium is divided into three sections: the arena, the Little Theater, and the Music Hall. We don't need the arena or the Little Theater, but the Music Hall rents for \$100 a day. There are other costs, of course, but they are miniscule compared to your estimate of \$5,000. We have booked the Music Hall (seats 2,600) for the theatrical production and may also use it for other major functions such as the Hugo Awards ceremony. It has comfortable theater seats rather than loose straight-back hotel chairs—and the air-conditioning system is designed to cool with a capacity audience. The hotel air-conditioning system is NOT—as anyone who has attended a masquerade or Hugo banquet can testify.)

Certain special interest groups should be permitted because they are traditional and fan-dominated, and none of their members will stay home if they aren't held but they'll make life hell for you. These are the Burroughs Bibliophiles, Georgette Heyer Tea, and such. All have a membership requirement or charge a fat admission and run their own affairs.

The four largest problem groups will be: Star Trek, Comics, SCA, and film freaks. My comments on all except SCA are well-known. On the SCA, they are pains in the ass usually anyway and have little place at an SF convention.

Rusty Hevelin prohibited all comic and such materials from the Windycon huckster room. There were no hassles at all because the hucksters did have complete advance warning before their money was taken. SF fans who also deal in comics, like Tony Anello, simply brought SF stuff instead. IT WORKS.

(Our criteria for selecting groups for whom to not program was fairly simple: Do they have their own fandom and their own conventions? Will their numbers be significant? It's absurd to rail against the Georgette Heyer Tea. No one attends the Worldcons for that! The same is true of the Dum-Dum. Ted White disallowed the Dum-Dum in 1967. They simply held it down the street at another hotel—which deprived the worldcon hotel of added revenue, doing nothing to improve relations with the committee.)

Just remember this:

NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE GOING TO BITCH.

Just don't worry about it.

ROBERT BLOCH
2111 Sunset Crest Dr.
Los Angeles, CA 90046

I have read the Fesselmeyer manifesto—and while I have no specific recommendations as to which *modus operandi* is the best, I most emphatically agree that the only solution to the problem is to limit attendance.

At least ten years ago I began preaching, in various fanzines, that something had to be done—that conventions were getting too big—that if committees wanted to have mammoth conventions they'd have to do what business and fraternal organizations do, and hire professional convention secretaries or planners who could negotiate with hotels, hold them legally to their promises, handle the logistics problems involved, and keep the event functioning so that the poor committee wouldn't miss out on attending its own con-



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vention—as is now the case, in most instances. I advocate hiking the fee for this purpose—and eliminating another pain in the butt: the frequent auctions, on which many con-committees come to depend to get them out of the red. Full many a con committee has started out with the idea of providing an entertaining program—only to find, once the affair starts, that the auction is the life-and-death matter of importance to them. So all too often I've seen panel gatherings ignored, a moderator pressed into service at literally the last minute, not even the bare essentials of a glass of water provided for speakers, programs running late because the committee isn't supervising—it's too busy huddling over receipts and figuring how much can be made from another auction if it's squeezed in extra. But enough of that—you get the point, I'm sure.

There are other objections to sheer size which you've not mentioned—but they're perhaps the most important when it comes to the success or failure of a convention. I'm thinking of the mechanics of *holding an audience*.

Let me cite examples: banquet toastmaster comes to mind because I've had a good deal of experience in this role. I can tell you—on the basis of that experience and from observation over the years—that the technique required to hold and entertain a crowd of 300 is totally different than that necessary to please a crowd of 3,000. The type of approach, the material used, must be much more professional, and there are very few people in our own field who can do it successfully; even in the smaller affairs, there are a lot of inept performances.

And the same applies all down the line. A panel held for an audience of several hundred can be an intimate, informal affair—with lots of give and take between panelists and questioners from the floor. The subject-matter can be simple. But when a panel appears before a crowd of five hundred or over, it becomes, somehow, an *event*: that means the subject should seem "important," the panelists "experts"—and there just won't be that feeling of easy-going give-and-take between panelists and audience.

Similarly, other program events seem to need the justification of "importance" to please a large crowd. So a big con loses a lot of its fannish flavor: you just can't stage amateur night before a gathering of thousands.

Along the same lines—*size itself* can ruin events. The "Meet the Authors" session was originally evolved for just that purpose: to give the fan a chance to meet the pros. And at first it worked. But the last such affair I saw—at the Torcon—was a farce. The crowd was so huge that *nobody* could get through to meet anyone. All it consisted of was a noisy confusion: a mass of standee audience listening to literally several hours of dragged-out impromptu introductions of pros—and that's all.

(I'm almost certain we will scuttle the "Meet the Pros" melee in favor of some alternatives we have in mind. Discon was just as bad, or worse, than Torcon.)

Similarly, the masquerades are spoiled by overcrowding—the logical idea is to treat them for what they really are—a show—and present them on a stage in a theater. There's no dancing any more, and at ground level audience grouping, half the crowd can't see anything—or do anything by suffocate.

(What would you think about the Music Hall as described in Chalker's letter—cool and comfortable.)

Cutting out fringe-fandom's fringe benefits is a practical step in the right direction. Most of them have their own conventions, and big ones too. There's no reason why a world *science fiction* convention must cater to all the specialized interests just because they're willing to rent a few huckster tables, place an ad or two, or rent a room. The con is still footing the big expenses, and the responsibility—let special fan-

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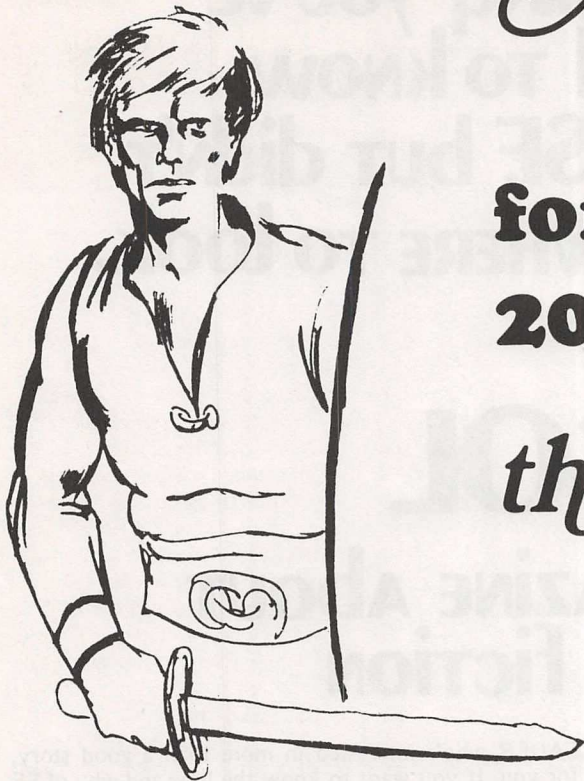
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groups attend, but there's no reason to cater to them programwise or otherwise—any more than they'd cater to you at their affairs.

My personal feeling is that any convention with attendance over 2,000, tops, is a major undertaking—and ripe for trouble. *Big* is not a synonym for *better*—as Discon reports seem to indicate. If high membership fees “discriminate” against some youthful and/or underprivileged fans, so be it. I speak as one who lived through the early conventions where even low fees (\$1 or \$2) “discriminated” against some of us who couldn't afford it—when only 32 could attend the Nycon banquet because it cost \$1—when most of us couldn't attend, period, because we had neither travel nor hotel money. There always was and always will be *economic* discrimination, but it is not, I repeat, any more of an “injustice” than an artist putting a minimum bidding price of \$100 on his work at an auction, when he knows many fans who like his stuff can't afford more than \$10—or a private golf or athletic or country club setting a high membership (and initiation) fee.

The inescapable fact is conventions are too damned big for their own or anyone's good—and if the growth isn't checked, they'll become rackets perpetuated by committees and promotional vehicles for hucksters and pro interests rather than fun affairs.

(It appears that has already happened with some of the fringe conventions.)

In order to halt that growth, membership must be curtailed—and in curtailing it, somebody will have to be left out. My feeling is that the higher price-tag will eliminate those whom SF cons can best do without—the fringe-fan, the non-fan, the freak-fan looking for a cheapie weekend, and the pre-teen or extremely early adolescent who all too often creates problems for committees and membership alike.

It's not up to me to pass such judgements—but as a responsible longtime fan and pro, as a participant in many conventions over many years, and as a former liaison agent between con-committees and the SFWA, I feel I've paid my dues and am entitled to express an opinion.

I sincerely wish the circumstances were otherwise—that cons could continue to grow and grow and get better and better—that the larger they become, the lower the cost of attendance might be—that there's room for one and all, whatever his or her tastes and affiliations.

But we've got to face reality: I think that's what you're doing, and I'm for it.

MIKE GLICKSOHN

141 High Park Ave.

Toronto, Ontario M6P 2S3

Basically I say damn good luck to you, and I hope you have the nerve necessary to carry through your ideas in the face of a fair amount of opposition from those who will be affected by what you plan to do. I'm entirely in favour of your attempt to limit attendance.

Of the plans you mention, I think the high at-the-door fee along with an advertised refusal to cater to fringe groups, is the only ethical and performable scheme. You seem to have given the matter a considerable amount of thought, and to have seen most of the advantages and disadvantages involved in the various possibilities.

There is really nothing objectionable about an at-the-door fee of, say, \$30. As long as this is advertised in any pre-con publicity, then the majority of people who are likely to want to go will have the choice of joining early and paying the cheaper rates. The traditional tendency of many fans to decide at the last

minute that they want to attend the worldcon will simply work against them in this case. I'd also be in favor of a very high attendance fee for people joining in, say, the last month, since this tends to be the time that quite a few local people find out about the con from newspaper articles on it. Biased as I may be, I'd be quite content if non-fans, that is, people not in fandom, had to pay through the nose to attend what is still basically a fannish function.

To counter the argument of exploitation that might be raised in objection to such a high fee, let me point out that for a five-day function such as KC plans to be, \$30 is still cheap by the standards of most modern conventions. And the con-goers will benefit either way: if attendance is lowered, we're all ahead. If by some miracle it isn't, there'll be lots of money left to be returned to fandom in some way or other.

(You don't expect to stop a fugghead in full cry with logic, do you? I hear that Venezuela is lovely in September.)

I've been arguing the matter of which came first, the program or the crowds, for some time. It will take a courageous committee to do the only thing possible to answer the question, that is to eliminate the specialty programming and see whether or not it keeps the people away. For a variety of reasons, I fully support your idea of refusing to cater to fringe groups such as Star Trek fans, and comic book fans, and making this perfectly clear in your publicity. Again, I don't see that any really valid objections could be raised by the people who will suffer from the absence of such things. And I won't miss them anyway.

Anyway, good luck. You'll get flack, certainly, but I hope you're able to shrug it off. Hopefully you'll get the enthusiastic vocal support of fandom as well, to offset any hassles from the “injured” groups. □



The Smoke-Filled Back Room

BY TOM REAMY 

The letter column in this issue was originally intended to be longer, but fifty-two pages is a good case of enough is enough. Anyway, the letters basically covered the same ground in pretty much the same way and, while each letter is interesting by itself, that many saying the same thing tends to numb the mind. Our high at-the-door fee was approved almost unanimously—if not completely. I'm not going to re-read them just to double check. The elimination of certain special interest programming was also unanimously approved—with some minor differences of opinion on which ones should be eliminated and which retained. A couple of people felt we couldn't, in fairness, eliminate one without eliminating them all. That may be true, but it would make for a pretty bleak program.

We were a little surprised at the unanimous approval. Bill was careful to see that representatives of all the groups we planned to de-program got copies of "The Whichness of the Why," but we received not one single complaint from any of them. Perhaps even they agree that there's no reason why the Worldcon should program for them.

Anyway, we want to thank the others who responded. They were (in no particular order): Hank Luttrell, Rick Sneary, Tony Cvetko, Ro Nagey, Donn Brazier, Roy Tackett, Howard DeVore, Dave Romm, George Fergus, George Scithers, Bob Pavlat, Bob Hillis, John Robinson, Buck Coulson, Mike Gorra, Meade Friereson, Dick Patten, Marci Helms, Tom Digby, George Flynn, Rich Bartucci, Larry Smith, Laurine White, Frank & Ann Dietz, Linda Bushyager, Larry Propp, and Harry Warner.

If you want to read the complete text of the letters, they will be published in the second issue of "The Whichness of the Why," available for 25 cents from Bill Fesselmeyer, 3035 So. 11th St. Place, Kansas City, Kansas 66103. Bill will continue the publication as a research instrument for his job as Program Coordinator, but it will not go free to the membership because MidAmeriCon isn't paying for it.

The letter column in PR3 should be a bit more varied in subject matter than this one. We want your thoughts on what we're doing; we want your ideas on innovative programming; this is your chance to get off your duffs (or taffs, as the case may be) and have your opinions heard. Don't assume your idea is too progressive—half the things we're doing would have gotten us burned at the stake a few years ago. It seems, though, now that the weight of outmoded fannish tradition is about to pull the Worldcon down for the third time, many people are getting their heads out of the conflu. The old cry of, "Something has to be done—but don't change anything!" has been

replaced by, "Glub, glub." However, my faith in fandom assures me there are a few out there who would go down with the ship and never know it sank.

Linda Bushyager had a number of interesting suggestions in her letter. She postulated that perhaps the reason many of the functions (masquerade and Hugo banquet especially) are overcrowded is because there is absolutely nothing else to do. The huckster room is closed, the artshow is closed, the movies are shut down, there are no parties—it's either the function or television in your room. We think she's right. We will definitely keep the movies going through all the major functions and it's likely—but not certain at this point—that we will also keep the huckster room open.

We're working on a lot of new ideas and we'd like to hear your opinions. If you think something we're doing is terribly wrong, we'll be happy to listen to *logical* reasons why. However, emotional ravings of, "It's wrong because it's never been done that way before," won't be given a lot of serious attention.

I got in on MidAmeriCon a bit late in the game—"got in" is perhaps the wrong word; "shanghaied" would be better—and I'm constantly amazed at how professionally and expertly the committee is going about the whole thing. I think the reason they're coming up with so many good new ideas is because they are all relatively new to fandom; none are old-time convention fans (Discon was the first for many of them), and they don't have a lot of bad old ideas to unlearn. They're looking at it with fresh eyes unclouded by "the way it's always been."

Anyway, some of the things we're doing and thinking of doing:

THE THEATRICAL PRODUCTION: It will be done primarily by local people who are involved in theater, and will be presented in the Music Hall of Kansas City's Municipal Auditorium. The scripting is in a pre-natal stage as yet, but will involve many classics of science fiction and fantasy woven together in support of a single theme. The sets and effects will be lavish, and it is anticipated that the production will be one of the most memorable things at the convention.

Our resident psychic tells us the production will be even more successful and extravagant than our thinking at the moment indicates. I haven't known him to be wrong yet. The production (as yet untitled) will be produced and directed by David Wilson who won first prize for "Best Dramatic Presentation" at the Discon masquerade.

NEO-PRO WORKSHOP: The workshop would not attempt to teach how to write; no stories would be submitted for criticism. It would be conducted by an author, an agent, and an editor and would teach the *mechanics*;

everything a neo-writer needs to know before putting a word on paper; the process of agenting and editing. Thanks to Bob Tucker for the idea, which we grabbed up immediately.

MASQUERADE: PR3 will contain the detailed rules for the MidAmeriCon masquerade, but I can give you a brief preview. We're considering having it in the Music Hall also—remember, cool and comfortable—but that isn't definite yet. However, a few rules are definite: a one-minute limit to presentations—enforced; certain types of costuming will be disallowed—*Star Trek*, SCA, belly-dancers, *Planet of the Apes*, etc.; strict pre-judging—no costumes and disallowed types of costuming will be eliminated before they get on the stage. We're thinking of having the belly-dancers perform during the judging intermission, or perhaps they can have a separate competition all their own. Belly-dancing seems to have become as fannish as filksinging. Communication on the masquerade should go to Joni Stopa, Wilmot Mountain, Wilmot, WI 53192.

GENRE LUNCHEONS: We're thinking of having one each day honoring a different genre, with a limited number of tickets sold. The



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Hucking Through Georgia

Previous Worldcons have pretty much decided on their own how various activities at the con will be run. With MidAmeriCon, the committee is sincerely interested in hearing from those directly involved as to just what they want. And in the huckster room, this means that a lot of the final decisions will depend on what the individual huckster has to say.

Some of the approaches which have been suggested in the past include, opening the huckster room in the evening; requiring signed receipts to leave the huckster room with packages; banning various specialty items which are (presumably) of limited interest to SF fans; and, because of growing interest by the IRS, signing binding contracts before table space is assigned. All of these and more are fair topics of discussion.

In order to generate a few comments, I might mention one new rule which could be implemented: banning TV newsmen with their cameras from the huckster room. This came to my attention at Discon when a local TV newscaster taped a segment on the convention and opened it with a tie-in to some of the more garish merchandise in the room.

While it wasn't quite as much of a put-down as some I've seen, it occurred to me that since we have no need of publicity, the entire thing was unnecessary. However, there may be others who don't agree and the purpose of this series is to air all the opinions possible and, from this, make a reasonable choice.

Our intent is to make this con and, in particular, the huckster room end of it, as responsive as possible to the members of the convention. Let's hear from you.

Tables are 6 feet long and are \$30.00 each. Make all checks payable to: MidAmeriCon; send checks, table reservations, and all huckster room communications to me,

Don Lundry
Huckster Room Coordinator
18 Karen Drive
Cherry Hill, NJ 08003

luncheons would be cheap, intimate, and private, with as many authors as we can round up. Genres that have been suggested are: hard science, sword & sorcery, horror & weird, SF satire, women authors and editors (though that seems to be more of a gender than a genre), and any number of other categories. If you have a suggestion, let us know.

FAN PUBLISHING SEMINARS: There'll probably be two; one for mimeographed fanzines and another for offset fanzines. The fanzine editors/publishers who wish to conduct the seminars will be expected to give away all the tricks of the trade. (Glicksohn, are you there?) These will be limited to those who have signed up for them in advance.

BANQUET/HUGO AWARDS/GUEST OF HONOR SPEECH: We're thinking of some major surgery here. Until Discon all happened at the same time and place—producing heat prostration and exploding bladders. Discon separated the GoH speech, but we may do it the other way; separating the Hugo Awards and possibly holding them in the Music Hall as a single major event like the Academy Awards in *Hollywo-o-od*. The GoH banquet will more than likely be a luncheon at which Mr. Heinlein, Mr. Barr, and Mr. Tucker will entertain.

ARTSHOW: Beginning in PR3 there will be a series of "historical perspective" articles on the Project Artshow, plus a lot of practical information for those who plan to enter. All communication about the artshow should go to: John & Bjo Trimble, 696 So. Bronson, Los Angeles, California 90005. The phone is: (213) 386-1454. MidAmeriCon will be their last out-of-state artshow and they're planning to go out with a bang.

HOTEL: The Muehlebach was recently purchased by the Radisson Hotel chain which will be sinking six million dollars into renovations before MidAmeriCon. Included is a completely new air-conditioning system, new lighting and sound systems in the ballrooms, new escalators, and complete redecoration of most of the sleeping rooms. PR3 will contain a good deal of hotel information.

PROGRAM BOOK: As you can see from this progress report, we are innovating Worldcon publications. The program book, as we've announced previously, will be the same size as the PRs, but will be hard cover with a full-color dustjacket. I'm very excited about it and it should boggle a few minds. The contents will be as innovative as the package.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: If you move, please send us a change of address. We haven't the time or the manpower to check all the fanzines for COAs. Returned progress reports will not be remailed until a 25c fee has been paid. We're sure you don't want to miss any of them.

Your membership card is included with this PR. If you can't find it, check the envelope, then the floor. If you still can't find it, let us know.

Also, this is the first PR you've received and you may wonder why it is number 2 instead of number 1, and why didn't you get number 1? PR1 was a one-sheet flyer distributed at Discon after Kansas City won the bid (if we'd lost it would've gone into the wastebasket). It contained some basic information about the con—some of which has changed, such as the membership rates and the ad rates—and had nothing not in this one. If you are a completist collector, drop us a note and we'll send you a copy.

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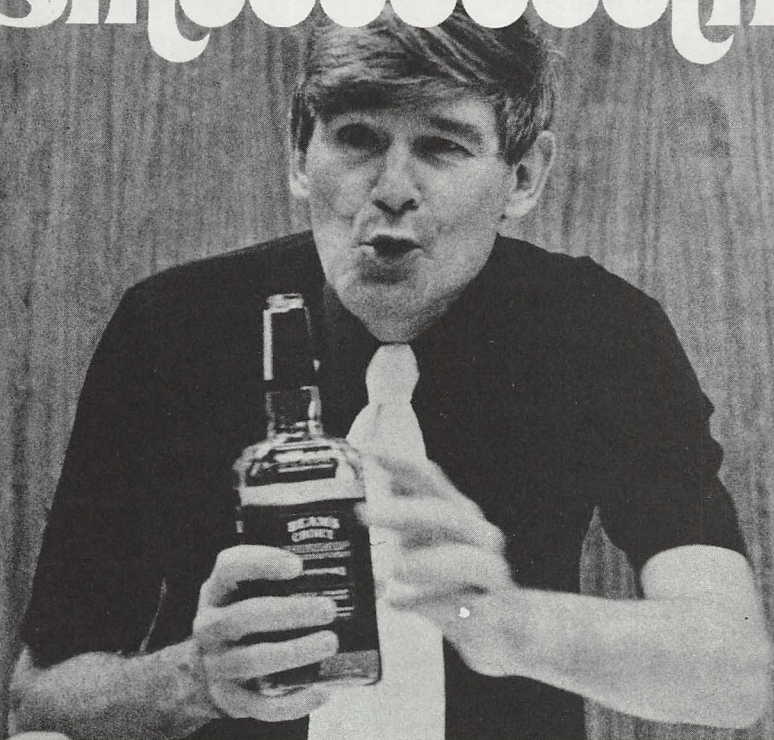
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BYOB CON 5. July 18-20, 1975. Muehlebach Hotel, Kansas City, Missouri. Guest-of-Honor: ROBERT BLOCH: Fan Guests-of-Honor: RON & LINDA BUSHYAGER. Toastmaster: BOB TUCKER. Special Guest Appearance: TIM KIRK. Membership rates: \$5.00 in advance, \$7.00 at the door. Huckster tables: \$10.00. Sleeping rooms: \$19.00 for singles, \$26.00 for doubles and twins. Byob Con 5 will be Bob Tucker's last convention before he leaves for Australia; join us for a special going-away party. Also: Games. Panel discussions. Art show. Banquet. A great line-up of films. Auctions. Parties, parties, parties. And a few smoooooooooth surprises. Make checks payable to: BYOB CON 5. Send memberships, table reservations, and everything else to: BYOB CON 5, 4411 Pennsylvania, Kansas City, MO 64111. You may also write for our nifty brochure/progress report absolutely free.

Chairman: Jim Loehr; Vice-Chairmen: Bill Fesselmeyer & Ron Benton.

Photograph by Fred Haskell

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WAYS TO PREPARE FOOT

THE KC WHIZ KIDS GET PUNCHED
SEE! OUT FOR SMART-MOUTHING

SEE! BOB BLOCH vs. BOB TUCKER.

SEE! LINDA DEMONSTRATE TASTY



MIDAMERICAN • 34th WORLD
MUEHLEBACH HOTEL SCIENCE FICTION
CONVENTION

People in the city
are confused

KIRK